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TREASON AND TRAGEDY

TREASON AND TRAGEDY

AN ACCOUNT OF FRENCH WAR TRIALS

BY

GEORGE ADAM



JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE
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TO
JOYCE
OF
VINEUIL

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF TREASON

THIS account of French war trials is inspired by no feeling of hostility against the Republic, which would seem in these days the most acceptable form of government in France; nor has it been written with any idea that treason is a weed peculiar to France. It can be found flourishing in every country's history, under every form of government.

The tragic human qualities of the whole long story would alone justify its being set down as a revelation of what is perhaps the most hateful aspect of war. But there are other and more important reasons for this re-washing of our neighbour's dirty linen in public. These cases form part of war history, and an understanding knowledge of them is essential to anyone endeavouring to follow events upon the Allied front and the dramatic rise and fall of governments and leaders during the war in France. Despite secrecy, never has a period in the world's history been so closely examined as that of the war, and that examination has been but

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begun. A flood of blue, yellow, grey and orange light has been cast by multi-coloured volumes which, if the man in the street cares to study them, give him a much wider realisation of how diplomacy works, and how foreign affairs may, at any moment, become more important to him domestically than municipal elections. It is as if the war had shown for the first time under the flesh of convention the joints, muscles, and nervous system of a people's government.

In the story of these trials people really have an opportunity of seeing how the wheels of government go round, such as has not been afforded in France since the Dreyfus case or the Panama scandal.

Even in such a crime as treason there are degrees of guilt. The old Treason Acts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Europe were all quite obviously directed towards maintaining the sanctity of reigning families against the still active presumptions of great nobles whose heads itched to wear a crown. The divinity of kings made of treason a crime almost as dreadful as that of direct sacrilege, and it was visited with the same dire punishment. A more humane conception of death no longer hangs a traitor by the neck until he is *not* dead, and then disembowels him alive before drawing and quartering him. In most countries

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nowadays a traitor is taken out and shot or hanged in decent privacy. In some a touch of shame is given to the execution by shooting the condemned man in the back. In nearly every country the development of the State, as distinct from that of the ruler and his family, has led to a new conception of treason, which, from being a crime against a dynasty, is become that infinitely more heinous offence, the betrayal of a whole country's cause and interests. Thus England's most persistent husband, Henry VIII, successively decreed that it was treason not to believe in the illegitimacy of Mary and the lawful birth of Elizabeth; that it was equally treasonable to imagine that either had been born in wedlock; or that both of them were not perfectly respectable females.

Treason, after all is said and done, is frequently an elusive kind of crime. It must of necessity be largely a question of degree and motive, but, with the growth of more or less national institutions, it is become a crime against the security of a State rather than of a dynasty. Formerly, treason was practically confined to offences connected with military and naval matters either in peace or in wartime, but with the great complexity of modern moral and material development, to-day it covers a vastly wider area. The field of treasonable opportunity has been made all-embracing by the

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mobilisation of every national resource in time of war, and the fighting force of men's minds is not the least vulnerable front to attack. The spirit of pacifism, international proletarian movements such as Socialism and Communism, are as liable to suspicion of treason to one set of men as are world groupings of capital and industry to another. Modern spiritual leaders such as Romain Rolland, whose preachings are mainly based upon love of peace, must of necessity arouse the hostility of people who are doing the fighting. The war to end war was full of paradoxes. Never before were assembled so many millions of passionate pacifists as met in the trenches during 1914-18. They were told they were fighting for peace, and yet anyone professing pacifist longings was sure to get into trouble. The sincere traitor, especially when of an international trend of mind, is a peril to his country in wartime against which it is difficult to guard. It seems, however, to be one of war's hard necessities that peoples are driven to consult the Old rather than the New Testament for guidance in their attitude towards their enemies, and the practice of turning the other cheek has not yet gained the approval of any General Headquarters Staff. A man may conceivably be a good patriot and yet be willing to put an end to war by other than the recognised

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means of defeating and humiliating his country's enemies.

A patriot who honestly believed, and had some reasonable basis for his belief, that an early peace would be better, not only for his country, but for humanity as a whole, than long-delayed and costly victory, and who worked for the realisation of his policy, is just as likely to be accused of treason as a wretch who sells a military secret.

This account of French war trials has been prepared from official records, from reports in *Les Causes Célèbres*, and from my recollections and notes made during the proceedings before the Third Court Martial of the Seine and before the Senate sitting as the High Court of Justice.

A rough classification of those cases would divide them into three main categories. There was at the bottom rung of the ladder the horde of wretched creatures, men and women in the occupied zones of France, who, weakened by privation and fear, or egged on by paltry greed, acted as informers in German pay and sent many a man to his execution. They were the dregs, the Quiens, Laperres, Toqués, through whose cumulative activities Miss Cavell met her end. Then came more ambitious, wholesale dealers in treason, men, in some cases of intelligence and influence, who sold themselves to Germany's propaganda,

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but in return for millions: the Bolos, Duvals and Lenoirs. Money was the motive-power in their *affaires*. Finally, much more debatable charges were discussed in which even the prosecution refused to suggest that any question of monetary gain could be put forward – these charges were made against MM. Caillaux and Malvy, the two most influential radical politicians in France, the former a brilliant ex-Premier and the latter for many years Minister of the Interior.

M. Joseph Caillaux is not a popular figure in England. Rightly or wrongly, we look upon his secret negotiations with Germany over Morocco as a betrayal of the Entente Cordiale. He, on his part, was convinced that Europe would be a happier continent if France and Germany could sink their differences, even if it meant abandoning Great Britain's new-found friendship. He might have been right, but the tremendous surge of events has overwhelmed him, and history will for ever wonder exactly what part he played during the war.

He must be the central figure in any account of French Treason trials, and yet the offences with which he was charged and condemned were of an entirely political nature. He stood for a *rapprochement* with Germany before the war, and was foolish or bold enough to pursue the same will-

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o'-the-wisp after the hostilities had broken out. His life has been one long tragedy, played in circumstances, both domestic and political, more befitting a character in mediæval Italian history than a statesman of the Third French Republic.

The easy-going amenities of life at St. Stephen's, its pleasant tradition of being the best club in the world, rob our politics of most of their salt, and lead British people to imagine that life is a much more settled and sedate business in civilised countries than is really the case. The stability of our Monarchy has contributed in our minds towards building up a false feeling of continuity in other lands. In spite of education we are apt to forget that the German Empire was less than fifty years old when it collapsed, and that France has had two empires, three monarchies and three republics in little over a hundred years.

Few men would have been able to predict the course of history had Republican France been defeated in the Great War. She might, by the accident of circumstance, or the emergence of a man, have been equally liable to give birth to another empire, or to a welter of Bolshevik anarchy. Personally, I believe that the Republican form of government has been consolidated in France by victory, even the barren victory of 1918. But the Republic had a hard fight for life. I have no desire

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to exaggerate the importance of French Royalists, but it is undeniable that they play an infinitely greater part in the political life of their country than do, let us say, the cranks who demonstrate on Oak Apple Day in England. They have an extremely virile daily newspaper, *L'Action Française*, directed, on the one hand, by that hard-hitting, uncompromising polemist, Léon Daudet, and on the other by Charles Maurras, a master of political philosophy. While Daudet appeals to youth's spirit of adventure, Maurras has day by day preached the gospel of monarchy, and both have never failed to lay before their readers examples of the slackness and corruption of Republican administration and institutions.

Daudet, in whom romance is hereditary, hits out without a thought of consequence. His conviction that a man is betraying his country is reached by mental processes no more complicated than those which lead a hysterical servant-girl at a revivalist meeting to testify that she is saved. Once he has acquired that conviction, *every action* of his unfortunate enemy is reflected in a distorting mirror. There is hardly a political leader of any note in France who has not at some period been held up to public execration as a traitor by Léon Daudet. The fact that a man is not a Royalist is sufficient proof of guilt. It was, therefore, natural

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that Daudet should have held in peculiar contempt M. Joseph Caillaux, M. Malvy, and other leaders of the Radical wing of the Republican party. As a matter of fact, philosophically Daudet and Caillaux were not very far apart, for Caillaux during the war had dallied with ideas of dictatorship which would have made Napoleon and even Mussolini look to their laurels.

His history is almost incredibly rich in film situations. He was a comparatively wealthy man when he entered politics. He had been an Inspector of Finance, and, strange to say, was an expert in the matter. As Prime Minister he conducted behind the back of his Foreign Minister, M. de Selves, the long negotiations with Germany over Morocco which led Europe to the brink of war in 1911. His first matrimonial venture led indirectly to his present wife shooting and killing the Editor of the *Figaro*, a crime of which she was acquitted on the very eve of the outbreak of war. Kept far from power during the war – he and his wife were mobbed in the streets of Paris and at Vichy – his reputation and his activities attracted towards him many of the curious peace-brokers employed by Germany and Austria to undermine Allied moral. He was arrested, tried by the High Court of the Senate on a charge of having imperilled the safety of the State, and condemned

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to three years' imprisonment. But such was his reputation as a financial wizard that in 1925 he was again Minister of Finance for a brief period. His friend and associate, M. Louis Malvy, who as Minister of the Interior had represented the absent Caillaux in five successive War Cabinets in France, was tried by the same tribunal and condemned to two years' exile for forfeiture, and he became again a Member of Parliament, and President of the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Deputies.

In differing degrees the names and actions of both men were linked up with most of the sensational war trials in France. M. Malvy had subsidised the *Bonnet Rouge*, a blatant organ of defeatism. He, like Caillaux, was in relationship with its two moving spirits – Almeyreda, who died mysteriously in gaol while awaiting trial on a charge of treason, and Duval, who was executed. Both were on terms of friendship with Bolo Pasha. Partly by political ambition, and partly by habits of personal camaraderie that were ill-suited in wartime to Ministers, whether in or out of office, they were led to become the centre of most of Germany's efforts to bring about in France a moral collapse such as that which shattered Russia's Empire and also brought Germany to her knees.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling once expressed his

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astonishment at the amount of interest taken by French people during the war in the long series of treason trials that filled the Third Court Martial of the Palais de Justice with sinister and sordid beings, trapped by their own ambitions, their greed, and sometimes merely by their vast vanity, in the world-wide mesh of enemy espionage. It would have been astonishing had the French not taken a passionate interest in such proceedings, for France knew, vaguely enough it is true, how far the work of national moral disintegration had been carried. Although the extent of the mutinies among some of the best troops on the Champagne Front had been concealed, it was known that there had been grave trouble, and that most of the discontent, which, unchecked, might have led to catastrophe, was directly due to defeatist agitation skilfully directed from Paris. Newspapers preaching discouragement and the impossibility of victory found their way in large numbers right into the front line. The poilu on leave was exposed to the same poison. He frequently found that his war-wearied folks had been attacked by the same arguments with greater success than in his own case. Forain drew a famous cartoon of two men in the trenches with the legend: 'If they only hang on!' – 'Who do you mean?' – 'Why, the civilians, of course'; which had a lot of truth in it. For the

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civilian, under quite inept political leadership, was getting rapidly 'fed up,' to return to war phraseology. It was, moreover, possible to establish a connection between enemy propaganda in the country and the policy of an early peace more or less openly advocated by some Socialist and Radical leaders.

Small wonder, then, that when France played her last card and handed power to Clemenceau, she should have watched with anguished attention his ruthless campaign against sedition-mongers, traitors, and politicians, whose judgment, warped by greed or disappointed ambition, had led them into closer dalliance with unclean things than was either safe for the country or healthy for themselves.

There would certainly have been a considerable commotion in England, and at no matter what period during the war, had men of the standing of M. Joseph Caillaux, a former Prime Minister, M. Malvy, ex-Minister of the Interior, M. Charles Humbert, Senator and newspaper-owner, been tried for treason. It would have been like placing Mr. Asquith, Sir John Simon and Lord Burnham in the dock. M. Ignace, Under-Secretary for Military Justice, with the energy and ferocious authority of Clemenceau behind him, made a sweep through all the weeds that had sprung up during the war and threatened to choke the whole

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life out of the country. Men and women of every degree were brought before the dread tribunal of the Third Court Martial to face the grim, satanic scrutiny of red-bearded Mornet, the Public Prosecutor.

Some were elegant and debonair, such as the exotic Bolo Pasha, who went to his death wearing white kid gloves. Some were abject, after the manner of Lenoir, who was twice taken to the stake, a screaming figure of terror, to die of fright before the firing-party's bullets completed the formality of the law's sentence. Others were like Duval, the brain beneath the *Bonnet Rouge*, whose intellectual conceit was staggering in its immensity and bore him courageously, though bewildered, through the long agony of trial and death. Others there were who slipped into treason through pure amorality, who saw no reason to refuse money or employment, no matter by whose hand it was tendered.

Most of those tried gave the impression that they were completely incapable of treachery, for they had not an elementary notion of the meaning of the word loyalty. There were crimes of many kinds, treason of many varied dyes, ranging from trading with the enemy to the real article of high treason, plotting the overthrow of the State, preparing a *coup d'état*, intelligence with the enemy, in fact every form of political action on a

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big scale. The moral guilt ranged from that of a German woman who was shot at Bourges by the French before the Cavell case, and was a patriotic spy, to the amorous and financial methods of Mata Hari, and touched the depths of infamous stupidity in the case of a regular army officer who, in return for 1000 francs a month, furnished German submarines with information about transport movements in the Mediterranean. He was a *bel homme* and, as the French say, 'twirled an advantageous moustache.' His army pay, however, did not suffice to clothe his mistress in that style to which her station in life had called her, so coldly he sacrificed the lives of his countrymen that she might have finer feathers. When the fellow was shot, the vanity which had sustained him through his trial lasted to the end. Just as the men of the firing-squad raised their rifles he shouted to them not to fire at his face. Perhaps he hoped to seduce women and betray Satan in hell.

Then there was the tragic series of treason trials following the liberation of French soil from the invader. In the moral depression caused by prolonged enemy occupation inevitably many people cannot resist, under the influence of fear, hunger, and cupidity, the bribes held out to them by the momentary conqueror to serve him either in commerce or intelligence. The people from

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the occupied territories who were condemned for treasonable intercourse with the enemy came for the most part from the very dregs of the population. Such individuals may, perhaps, be of interest to the criminologist, but they affected but little the main currents of French opinion. It is rather in the men who seemed to be irresistibly attracted towards certain great figures in parliamentary life, in the vast enterprises of Germany's intelligence service in France, in the deep glimpses occasionally given of the inside of French politics, that lies the abiding interest in the French treason trials.

Week after week, in courts-martial, men full of hope and bluff collapsed under the dreadful pressure of Mornet. I saw a Prime Minister fighting not only for his policy, his political existence, but for his life as well; saw uncomprehending wretches in the dock give up all hope of understanding what it was all about; jostled with perfumed actresses, and other sensation-hunters who would have been better if scented, and throughout much of that time the distant guns could be heard throbbing dully in the air, while occasionally Bertha would drop a message of explosive hate in the vicinity.

CHAPTER TWO

BOLO

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR MORNET had lain back in his chair in court for nearly two days while a jostling crowd of pretty women hunting sensations had tittered at his expense. The officer judges had looked in pained questioning towards Colonel Voyer, who seemed to have forgotten the respect due to military justice and to have been replaced in his functions by the prisoner in the dock. Bolo held the stage and seemed to have become President of the Third Court Martial of the Seine.

Bolo Pasha was persuasive, pitying, cajoling and menacing in meeting these ridiculous charges of treason made against him. How, he seemed to ask, with a wave of his delicate hands, how could you expect a set of narrow-minded soldiers, pettifogging underpaid lawyers, and near-sighted accountants, to begin to understand the mentality and transactions of a man who, like himself, was in the habit of juggling with millions, and associated with the captains and kings of the

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world? – as soon expect an oil and colour merchant to appreciate the delicate strength of a Whistler or the economic virtue of a Rockefeller.

Sleek and plausible, Bolo dominated the court. Accounts? Why should he keep accounts? Why should he, money's master, not its slave, worry about such things? 'Why,' he loftily exclaimed, 'this little sheet of paper is my only record of a twelve-million-franc deal. Come now, M. Mornet, you don't even know what a million looks like. It is a little bundle of notes no bigger than that.'

Then the hunched figure of M. Mornet stirred. He thrust his heavy shoulders forward and his red Shavian beard flashed out like a fork of hairy lightning.

'Bolo, do you know me? Kindly treat me with respect and call me by my title; for it is as representative of the French Republic that I mean to get your head.'

This brutal recall to fact staggered the prisoner. For the first time he saw what lay behind the guard with fixed bayonets and the uniformed impassivity of his judges. Mornet was as quick as any prize-fighter to see that 'his man' was rattled by this blow, and questions calling for straight answers rained upon the crumbling man in the dock. Gone was his jaunty assurance. He was slipping, falling, and he knew it.

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Drowning men, we are told, see with their last vision a vivid flashlight picture of their lives. Bolo as a dying man played the leading part in a melodramatic film the whole background of which was composed of 'fade-outs' from his past. It was as though a man while still alive were forced to read his own record written in the historic past – a record starting with the petty speculations of a grocer's boy, the seduction of his master's wife, and culminating in colossal fraud and the betrayal of a nation and a cause. Sitting in court it was impossible not to be aghast at the cold courage of the rogue and the credulity of his victims; and there stood the rogue, dupe himself, with even his blind faith in eleventh-hour luck dying, dying.

* * * * *

Bolo's name will stay long in history, for 'Boloism' became a label attached to a recognised brand of loose political thought, and synonymous with an administrative slackness that brought France to the very edge of disaster. He was no politician; he did not even call himself a statesman. He was no journalist; he did not even call himself a publicist. Yet politics and journalism were his undoing. He had neither oyster nor sword. To him life was nothing but a crib to be cracked. His burglar's tools were bluff and luck. The

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swag was vanity and pleasure. In seeking satisfaction for either passion Bolo found no crime too grandiose, no swindle too mean.

Casanova and Cagliostro were his masters in quackery as they were in cynicism – arts essential to a successful swindler's career. Both were equipped for their shady traffickings among women and State secrets with a general culture far in excess of that of Bolo, who, moreover, had to meet a much wider spread of intelligence than was common in their days. To-day Cagliostro would lose all his gold in an oil ramp, and any moderately intelligent street-walker would give Casanova into custody for annoying her. Yet Bolo hooked and landed a matrimonial fortune, and successfully swindled the German Government out of more millions than Cagliostro imagined could exist.

The early charlatans had at least an excuse for their misdeeds in the general moral laxity of their times. It was a more or less understood thing that in the absence of any imperative family, religious or political reason, most people could and would move about from one camp to another without anyone thinking a doit the worse of them. The slogans of to-day, such as love of country, defence of the soil, or the Fight for Freedom, were as unknown to them as they were meaningless to

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Bolo, who may, it is to be hoped, long retain his sorry supremacy as a finished type of adventurous, amoral egoist. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children prosecuting Herod, or the Purity League bringing suit against Sappho for moral turpitude, would not have been less reasonable than was modern society when it charged Bolo with treachery. He, like so many others who followed him, could not morally be held guilty of such an offence. For he did not know the meaning of the word loyalty, whether applied to his own family and his own country or to anybody else's family and country.

He was not Jack but Knave-of-all-trades. His occupations, before he absconded from France with his employer's wife and jewels into Spain, included dentistry, grocery and fishmongery. He left Spain for South America with a wife of his own. To a man of his physical attractions the luxuriant and adventurous life there offered boundless opportunities of white-slaving and blackmailing.

Only glimpses of Bolo's existence at this period could be obtained; but one, of this dark-eyed romantic impressing the women of Caracas by his tiger-skin breeches, and another, of his engaging in the shadier operations of the Colombian emerald trade, provide a summary of the gaudy, greedy vanity of the man. He returned to France, if not

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with the wealth of the Indies, at least with an appearance of means; and at Bordeaux he fell on his feet and married, bigamously, having forgotten his first wife abandoned in South America, a young and charming widow who enjoyed the esteem of all who knew her, utterly apart from her having inherited over three million francs. His ascendancy was complete and persisted to the end. There were few incidents in the trial so dramatic as that which brought the two wives to the witness-stand together to plead for Bolo's life.

The widow was as wax in his hands, and she surrendered control of her fortune to him without any sigh save that of content. A man of his past might well have been satisfied to live happily ever after upon his wife's income. But despite all his failures he still believed in his star. His wife trusted him in every way because, she explained to the court, he was 'so clever and knew as few other men how to deal with business in a large way.' As a matter of fact, he rushed into business much as he had rushed into dentistry, and with qualifications just as slender. His bride was swept out of her quiet existence in the provinces into the broad stream of pre-war Paris life. The ménage set up house in the Etoile quarter, and entertained in lavish style the world and his wife and the half-world and its half-husbands.

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Bolo had much of the mental agility that distinguished de Maupassant's *Bel Ami*, and with the quick wit of the *arriviste* he never lost a chance of making a useful or forgetting a troublesome acquaintance. Backed by the evidence of real fortune supplied by his wife's capital, Bolo's magnificent schemes for making millions appeared to be substantial business possibilities. In the lax political and social world of Paris, he became a sort of silver-gilt Monte Cristo. He understood, as only a southern Frenchman can, the great social and political art of rubbing a man's back so that your own may also be rubbed. He very quickly enlarged his visiting-list, and during the trial not a little malicious amusement was aroused by the somewhat laboured affirmations given by ex-Prime Ministers, deputies, high judicial and administrative authorities, of the slightness of their relations with the man in the dock.

Among the more glittering of the social assets acquired by Bolo was no less a person than His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, whose acquaintance he made through a lady with operatic tendencies. Bolo made much of his acquaintance, entertaining him in flamboyant fashion during a Khedival visit to Paris, drove him in a four-in-hand to the 'Drags,' and organised some of the unofficial events of the royal sojourn. Bolo's

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importance in social, political, and financial circles grew. He rushed about Paris feverishly engaged upon a multitude of affairs which soon absorbed his wife's fortune, together with a lot of borrowed money. Project after project failed. A grandiose scheme for controlling the emerald-markets of the world came to naught, and Bolo's picture of himself at the head of a South American De Beers gave way to a dream of Bolo as a great Cuban banker.

He was even less fortunate with banking than he was with emeralds. Madame Bolo, in her pathetic evidence in favour of the man who had ruined her, tried to move the military judges by exclaiming that he had always been an active and regular man of affairs and started his day's work at half-past nine every morning. There have been cases in which a sentimental French jury has admitted mitigating circumstances, when counsel has eloquently shown that the murderer had always been good to his aged mother; but punctuality in business is never likely to be accepted as an excuse for treason in wartime. A little less activity, a little less punctuality in heading for ruin, might have saved Bolo from his last desperate throw. Without exception his rosy dreams of unlimited wealth turned into nightmares of anxiety. Credit started slipping. People who

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had lent him money insisted upon being paid back, and those who had borrowed forgot their debts. Bolo played with money in the same reckless spirit of *naïveté* that moves a child to take an intricate mechanical toy to pieces, and by 1914 he was facing ruin.

Then at last his gambler's trust in fortune was rewarded with a dazzling smile. He pulled off a tremendous coup.

Abbas Hilmi, still then Khedive, was hard up. This was a chronic and natural state in view of the corruption and extravagance of his Court. He confided his difficulties to Bolo, to whom he bitterly complained of Great Britain's insolence in refusing to tide him over his temporary difficulties about ready cash. Bolo's schemes for raising money were always marked with the greatness of simplicity. He went to the Khedive in Switzerland as a financial saviour. His Highness, his Pashas, His Highness's ladies and the Pashas' ladies, listened entranced to Bolo as he juggled with millions. To Bolo trembling on the verge of bankruptcy millions were a mere matter of routine. His Highness wanted money. The business was easy. A renewal of the Suez Canal concession was under discussion. Britain was willing to pay only a beggarly £1,500,000. Bolo would obtain £3,000,000. His Highness,

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moreover, had been altogether too considerate in ceding the tobacco monopoly. Bolo would get him another £5,000,000 from that source.

Abbas Hilmi was so impressed by the plausible self-assurance of this ruined adventurer that Bolo came back from Switzerland with the title of Pasha and – what was more to the point – with a letter empowering him to act for the Khedive in all financial transactions. The unhappy man never had a chance of showing what use he would have made of the wide powers conferred upon him. Almost immediately after his return to Paris the war broke out. Up till then Bolo must, indeed, have felt that Providence kept a special department to look after adventurers, for the prospects of legal profit and wholesale robbery contained in his appointment were tremendous.

The deposition of Abbas and the sequestration of his property killed the last remnants of hope. Catastrophe faced Bolo again. Abbas Hilmi's relations with the British Government in Egypt had never been cordial. Finance was a frequent obstacle in the path of friendship. The British official mind, while willing to tolerate a reasonable amount of ordinary oriental extravagance, refused utterly to countenance wholesale corruption and oppression in order to satisfy the appetites of the Khedival Court and its parasites. When war broke

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out Abbas was busily engaged in European intrigue against Britain. He was deposed in December 1914, and in becoming, as he did, that very month, an agent of Germany's propaganda and secret service, the Khedive was able to satisfy not only his personal hatred of things British, but also the more pressing of his financial needs.

Immediately the Battle of the Marne had stabilised the Western Front, Germany sought for a means to sap Allied moral by a propaganda attack from the rear. The ex-Khedive eagerly took up the matter. He had remained in touch with his financial adviser Bolo, who through Saddik Pasha put forward a scheme which did more credit to his sense of humour and imagination than to other people's intelligence.

A rogue's greatest difficulty is to appear to be an honest man with banking references and a respectable past. In all big enterprises of propaganda or corruption of any kind the money used must present a sweetly innocent appearance to the world. Bolo's first idea was to create a Swiss bank, flying, not the Jolly Roger, but the crossed keys of St. Peter, through which funds for pacifist purposes could be distributed in France under the cloak of ordinary religious propaganda.

This fantastic project would have placed a Mohammedan ex-Khedive in control of a so-called

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Roman Catholic bank to work upon the minds of officially freethinking France with capital supplied by Protestant Germany. Money in Bolo's magnificent mind was not only international, it was also pantheistic. Berlin without even a frosty official smile declined to believe in the efficacy of any such arrangement, even though Bolo boasted of his acquaintance with the Pope's brother.

Bolo became more venturesome and offered to make himself directly responsible for the great work of corruption. After a number of agitated meetings and journeys to Rome and Switzerland, Saddik Pasha was dispatched to Berlin with a complete outline of Bolo's new plan. The conspirators awaited his return with gnawing anxiety. Saddik arrived in March 1915. The plan was accepted and von Jagow offered the ex-Khedive £500,000 to put it into effect. The Pashas were delighted, but Bolo scorned the terms. What, he asked, could he do with half a million sterling? Adding: 'At that price I can buy neither paper nor influence, let alone people's consciences, for they have a very delicate sense of honour in France. If von Jagow would double the amount something might be done.'

Saddik successfully urged Bolo's arguments upon the Germans, and returned to the waiting

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conspirators at Zurich, preceding a courier who bore the first of the monthly payments in the shape of three cheques drawn upon different banks in Switzerland. Bolo, in spite of the Prince's entreaties, was too prudent to receive the money directly from German hands, and, having apparently no one else he could trust, the ex-Khedive waited himself upon the platform at Zurich, and himself presented the cheques for payment. Things did not go smoothly. The ex-Khedive was travelling under an assumed name, and one of the banks was so suspicious of the transaction that he had to reveal his identity before the cheque was paid. At another of the banks he was kept kicking his ex-Khedival heels for hours in the general waiting-room while discreet inquiries were being made. The next day, after a slight skirmish about the division of the swag, Cavallini, Bolo's representative, left for Paris with the sinews of peace wherewith to put his great plan into practice.

It was not altogether without justification that Bolo had pointed out to von Jagow that a man in his position in Paris might well, without arousing suspicion, acquire interests in newspapers which, with discreet management, could when the time came help in a campaign for a separate peace, weaken Anglo-French confidence, and serve Ger-

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many's economic interests after the war as well as her political interests during any peace conference. The Bolo façade was still imposing. His relations with men of all political parties from Caillaux to Barthou were well advertised. He still appeared to be a man of wealth, a busy *brasseur d'affaires* whose desire to enlist the support of politicians in defending his many commercial and financial ventures against blackmail would provide a natural explanation of his desire to acquire control of a newspaper or two. He aimed high, and, plausibly enough, showed that *Le Temps* had been weakened after the death of Adrien Hébrard, its great proprietor, and that the *Figaro* had suffered greatly by the assassination of Gaston Calmette, its editor, by Madame Caillaux. The newspapers to be approached were chosen with a skilled understanding of the special part each could play in its own sphere. Political power would be provided by *Le Temps*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Rappel*. *L'Information* would work in the financial and economic field. Unfortunately for Germany, *Le Rappel* alone proved to be ready to accept Bolo's money, and it proceeded to run a campaign marked by almost virulent jingoism in favour of the whole Rhine becoming French! Other papers were approached but without success.

It will never be known exactly how much of

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this first German payment actually reached Bolo. Like many another rogue he was frequently swindled by his associates, and it is certain that much of the amount stuck to Egyptian fingers on its way through Switzerland. Bolo at the trial was shown to have received at least one million francs from the first cheques, and considerable proof was brought forward that the sum was actually double that amount. By the time he had settled with one or two of his more pressing creditors, given his wife a pearl necklace, and rounded off his estates at Biarritz by purchasing a few lots of land, there was practically nothing left for Germany, and Germany awaited immediate results.

The ex-Khedive's action in keeping for himself a really royal share of the money infuriated Bolo, who hurriedly found means to let Germany know that results could not possibly be obtained quickly if money were only to be available in monthly dribblets of a million or two. He was a big man and required to be treated on that basis. Nevertheless the second instalment was paid to the ex-Khedive, and things at once came to a head. Bolo meanwhile declined to go further into matters with the ex-Khedive, who gathered his satellites around him to discuss what should be done. The scene as described by an amateur French secret agent was extremely comic. By then Abbas Hilmi knew that

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Bolo could not carry out his plan. He himself had no other means of giving Germany her money's worth. He had the money and hated to part from it. He found a hundred reasons for keeping it, and argued strenuously with Saddik Pasha, who, knowing his Germany, advocated an immediate and total reimbursement. One can hear Mademoiselle Lusanges, whose appointment at the refugee Court need not be closely defined, murmuring regretfully: 'It really would be a bore to have to give the money back to those "boches".' The agent in his report sapiently remarked that when there was a question of receiving money a German remained a German, but when money had to be repaid he immediately became a 'boche.'

~~The ex-Khedive, strong in the fact that possession is nine-tenths of the law, decided to cling to the whole sum; but, eventually alarmed by Germany's growing pressure, he authorised Saddik to repay 700,000 francs, and to explain as best he could that the rest of the money, over a million and a half, had already been spent. Saddik, at the close of an extremely stormy interview with the German Ambassador in Vienna, was requested to point out to His Highness that money questions were 'extremely delicate and that the world applied a special term to those who kept money which did not belong to them.'~~

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Bolo with considerable skill avoided any such humiliating loss of credit in German eyes. He was quick to see that Abbas Hilmi could be of no further use to him and managed to convey to Berlin a sense of his righteous indignation at such barefaced roguery.

This was the end of Bolo's Egyptian adventures. While the ex-Khedive was fleeing from the wrathful atmosphere of Austria to the more or less placid neutrality of Switzerland, Bolo was already at work in Paris upon more hopeful lines.

Among his many important acquaintances there was Charles Humbert, Senator for the Meuse and Vice-President of the Senate Army Committee. Humbert was a superb specimen, morally and physically, of the political profiteer. Bloated, greedy, unscrupulous, loud-mouthed and dangerous, he had bullied his way through to front rank. Graft on war-office contracts was his chief source of income. Humbert had the misfortune to be caught twice running with his coffers full of German money, and he only escaped joining his associates at the traitors' stake at Vincennes by four votes to three of a court martial.

Bolo was not alone in working for Germany in the Paris press. While he was seeking through his Egyptians to capture *Le Temps* and the *Figaro*, German money, supplied through Pierre Lenoir,

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a worthless French youth, had already enabled Humbert to become director of *Le Journal*. The partnership did not work well. Humbert did not inquire very closely into the origins of money entrusted to him. He may have suspected the source of his partner's capital from the start. In any case his suspicions became a certainty owing to the revelations of a dying woman who considered herself to have been abandoned by Lenoir.

Humbert saw the necessity of getting rid of his undesirable partner, of frightening him out of the concern, and at the same time of making a handsome profit by the operation. But Lenoir, thinking, probably with reason, that Humbert could as little afford a public scandal as he could himself, refused to be bullied and had to be bought. Humbert, on the look-out for fresh capital, found Bolo ready to be of service to him. A contract was quickly drafted whereby Bolo undertook to invest five and a half million francs in *Le Journal*. He was in possession of no such sum, but seems to have been in no doubt as to where he would find it.

Bolo arrived in New York on 24th February 1916 to negotiate a loan of nearly two million dollars on no other security than that provided by his contract with Charles Humbert. His first call was upon Pavenstedt, a German agent in the banking world of New York. Their conversation

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was at the start an interesting bout of fencing, in which the German displayed those qualities of prudent stupidity essential to a man in his position when dealing with such a peculiar business proposal. Pavenstedt pointed out that as a matter of pure business he could see nothing in the matter. There was no security for such a loan and no special commercial advantage to be gained by any American engaging in such an operation. Bolo explained that it was as a Frenchman, as a good European, that he wanted an early peace. The great attack at Verdun had begun. France was being bled white. The whole thing was too stupid, and the *Journal* would work for this early peace. Finally, they got near enough for Pavenstedt to hazard the remark that there was only one man in America who might be interested in the proposal and that was Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador. Bolo frankly declared that it did not matter to him where the money came from. Two days later, that is, four days after Bolo's arrival in New York, the American authorities were decoding a message from Bernstorff to the German Foreign Minister in which he told von Jagow: 'I have received direct and absolutely trustworthy information with regard to political action in an enemy country which would bring about peace. One of the most important political

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people of the country is trying to borrow \$1,700,000 in New York for which guarantees will be given. The matter seems of the highest importance. Can the money be sent to New York at once?’

Three days afterwards Herr von Jagow telegraphed to his Ambassador agreeing to the loan ‘if the pacifist movement is really serious,’ but adding, in an amusing estimate of the Allies: ‘If the country concerned is Russia there is nothing to be done, for the amount is too small to be of any real use there. The same applies to Italy, where it is really not worth while spending so much.’

On such information the ‘loan’ of this great sum was concluded. It was to be repayable two years after the conclusion of peace and was to bear no interest.

Governments frequently have to take risks that would raise the hair of a bucket-shop proprietor, and for a loan of this description no solid guarantee or binding contract could be devised save that provided by the great moral agent of fear. The only document recording the loan was Bolo’s receipt for the money. When Bolo asked his judges how they imagined that any Government with an ounce of common sense could have carried through a transaction based upon such flimsy material, the prosecution pointed out to Bolo that

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his signature at the bottom of the receipt was as sound a guarantee as anyone could reasonably expect. 'We know,' said Lieutenant Mornet, 'that when a Government has a receipt of this kind the man who has signed it is lost if he fails to carry out his undertakings.' It has long been a favourite game of spies and counter-spies, agents and double agents, to try to take the money without performing the services for which payment has been made. But this is and always must be an excessively dangerous way of playing on Tom Tiddler's ground, for means of giving away a traitor to his own Government are as varied as they are effective.

What yield could Germany expect to get from her investment in *Le Journal*? At first sight it is rather difficult to see what she hoped to obtain, and, as a matter of cold fact, when she gave Bolo his ten million francs she just threw the money out of the window. Throughout the period when, first through Lenoir, and then through Bolo, her money had made its way into the paper, only two articles could be found by the prosecution which by the widest stretch of imagination could be considered as being German propaganda. The paper under Charles Humbert was notoriously, blatantly, and perhaps at times embarrassingly patriotic. In close touch with the armament ring in France,

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every morning he thumped a big drum and bellowed out above his signature, 'Des Canons, des Munitions.' Financed by German money, he, Senator for Verdun of all places, was loudest in denouncing the Hidden Hand and the Enemy Ears which listened to your very thoughts. And he retained complete political control of the paper.

The defence made what capital it could of these facts, but the court was more impressed by the arguments of the Public Prosecutor, Lieutenant Mornet, who pointed out that the purchase of *Le Journal* was no ordinary transaction. Germany had to be patient in acquiring control over the paper and she had to bide her time before she thought of enforcing that control.

'She had,' he said, 'to wait for a propitious moment so as to exploit the effect of bad news and war-weariness in France. When that time came Germany would take over the paper. The Bolo scandal broke out too soon for Germany, as it did for Charles Humbert. Everybody was taken by surprise. But let us suppose that nothing is known of the Swiss (Lenoir) and American (Bolo) transactions, and that public opinion is anxious, depressed and pessimistic. Then Germany sends her emissary to Charles Humbert, the man of 'Guns and Munitions,' Vice-President of the Senate Committee of the Army, Senator for the

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Meuse and Director of *Le Journal*, and warns him, saying: 'Take care. You have had fifteen millions from Germany. You were first capitalised through Lenoir. The first time you had ten millions of German money through your hands. Then by a curious fatality you allow Bolo to put another five million francs of German funds into your concern. You fall from Lenoir to Bolo. Charles Humbert, will you work for us?' Charles Humbert replies: 'No, I won't work for Germany,' and is told to get out. Oh, it's easy to say that one has been a victim of fate, a target for the intrigues of enemy agents. It is easy to say that that has happened once, but is it possible to explain such an accident happening twice over? There are fatalities stronger than any heroism. Well, I am willing to admit that Humbert would have been a hero, but Germany, who is realist, who speculates on realities, thought that when Humbert found himself faced with such a scandal, so close to the Tarpeian Rock, he would clear out rather than allow himself to be buried beneath the avalanche. That is what Germany hoped for. Therein lay her interest in acquiring a footing in *Le Journal* for a second time. Thus *Le Journal* became the property of Bolo, or rather of his friends.'

If Richard Wagner had produced the *Ring*

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already forged and rounded in one piece for one performance only the world would still be wondering what it was all about. Constant attendance at French treason trials led to mental indigestion of a similar sort. In the Bolo case much of the evidence was as a shadow of the coming trial of Humbert, and when proceedings were begun against the latter there was much that had reference to the already concluded trial of Bolo. It needed patient study of all these *affaires* to discern the *leit-motif*, which was Caillaux, and also to discover the general scope of Germany's plans. War is not a thing to be carried out in watertight compartments. It is, to begin with, not an end in itself but an instrument of policy. Strategy in the field and political considerations of the widest nature react one upon the other. Military and political action must be co-ordinated if the main objective is to be attained. Study of the evidence and documents produced in the long series of French treason trials shows how closely knit together were Germany's military and political enterprises. A document which in some mysterious manner found its way into the possession of Humbert shows that already by the end of 1915 Germany was preparing for the great battle of Verdun, and that the struggle was intended to be a final test of arms and of moral.

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It was apparently written about the time when Bolo was preparing to enter *Le Journal* and indicates, if vaguely, the part propaganda was to play in exploiting victory at Verdun. The message was written in the angle code and it referred by initials to men who three years later were called upon to stand their trial for treason. It showed that Germany had accumulated a peace chest in America for the preparation of a revolution in France following upon the fall of Verdun. In not a few particulars it was similar to the Rubicon plan for a *coup d'état* prepared by Caillaux and discovered in a Florence safe two years later. It must be understood that the document is German and that the mention of certain names is far from showing that the individuals in question were in any way aware of the part Germany hoped they would play in certain circumstances.

The document read: 'All our conditions are accepted. The cash is safely deposited in a good German bank at Cincinnatti. \$10,000,000 for C[illaux] and his friends. \$10,000,000 for the account of the two big nob. Ros . . . saw Bul[ow] yesterday. He wants Briey and Antwerp. He agrees upon other matters, but will only give \$5,000,000 for the press and a million for X and his friends. Ros . . . has the cheques, all signed for the full amount. The movement should start

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in Paris immediately Verdun has been taken. Bul[ow] insists that we should have Cl[emenceau] with us, and says that he will do anything to upset Bri[and] and Po[incaré]. The Colonel must take great care that the explosion does not happen before the fall of Verdun, which will happen in the beginning of April. Be very careful as to whom you approach. Don't try He . . . He is mad. As to Ul[mann] he works with Ca[illaux] and we can do nothing more for him. Ros . . . has ten millions for the small fry. That ought to be more than sufficient. The Count says that Ma[lvy] might be approached but with plenty of prudence. It would be better to leave that to Ca[illaux]. As for Bri[and], Bul[ow] says that we had better get rid of him as arranged with Mademoiselle L. . . . When everything is ready bring out the red flag. Don't have any meetings before. 'That will be safer.'

No evidence was produced at the trial, nor is there any reason to suppose, that Bolo was acquainted even with the main lines of Germany's general plans. His only concern in the matter was to get as much money as he could out of them, and to do so as secretly as possible. Unfortunately for him, banks treat millions with more respect than he did himself, and the prosecution found no difficulty, once America had come into the war,

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in tracing the somewhat bewildering passage of Bolo's millions from the German bank through half a dozen American banks until they finally came to rest at his credit in Paris.

There the new owner of *Le Journal* was soon busy pulling strings for his own aggrandisement. His influence counted for something. He soon had the regular clientèle of a newspaper magnate, composed of generals, prefects, politicians and business men who relied upon getting by favour the promotion they could not exact by merit. He even went down to San Sebastian with Charles Humbert on a self-imposed mission to the King of Spain, which had previously been discussed at the President's palace in the Elysée.

His good luck did not last very long. Already something was becoming known of the earlier Egyptian deal. Léon Daudet, self-appointed spy-hunter in chief to the Republic, was on his trail. For a while Bolo's big position and his political acquaintances were able to protect him against too drastic curiosity on the part of the police, but he thought it prudent to remain close to the Spanish frontier at his villa at Biarritz. There was not at the moment much reliable evidence against him. It was only when America's intervention in the war made searching investigation in that country possible that overwhelming proof was obtained of

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Bolo's treason. He was removed to Paris and arrested, at the beginning of the storm which was to place Clemenceau in power with a mandate to be ruthless in destroying the poisonous weeds of treason and defeatism, wherever they might be found and no matter who had planted them.

Bolo was unanimously condemned to death in the middle of February 1918 and was shot at dawn at Vincennes on 17th April. He sought in vain by the promise of 'revelations' to put off the evil day. He died better than he had lived. The prospect must have become familiar to him as he sat through all the weary months of inquiry and all the long days of his trial, stumbling like a blind man from one contradictory system of defence to another. He displayed a certain amount of coquetry about his 'last toilet' and dressed himself in a black suit specially ordered for his final appearance *dans le monde*. He put on white gloves and placed over his heart two handkerchiefs which he left in his will to his wife and to his brother. He received the last attentions of the prison barber and the chaplain before driving off with the Military Governor to the traitors' stake.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RED BONNET

GERMANY's schemes with regard to Bolo came to light before they had time to mature into action and results, and the first case of completed treason to be considered by court-martial was that of the *Bonnet Rouge* gang.

Almeyreda, who founded this infamous sheet, was an Anarchist with a peculiarly unsavoury reputation. He acquired a certain amount of influence by reason of the support, financial and moral, he received from Caillaux for services rendered during Madame Caillaux's trial for the murder of Gaston Calmette. His subsequent relations with M. Malvy are described in a later chapter. He was found strangled in his cell three weeks after his arrest. His widow did not hesitate to suggest that the gaolbird who was placed in attendance on him was responsible for silencing the man who knew too much to be popular with certain highly placed politicians.

Almeyreda's disappearance, however, by no

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means affected the course of the trial. He was at the best an unscrupulous, if picturesque, ruffian, of a breed that can only come to the fore in time of disaster. He was merely an agent and tool of men infinitely more clever than himself. Most of the men who crowded the dock were equally devoid of interesting qualities. They belonged to the editorial staff of the paper. There was Goldsky, a regular type of semi-intellectual Russian Jew, with as his only saving grace a fanatical taste for revolution. He managed to evade war service at the Front, and set himself with passion to preaching civil war in the rear. There was Landau, a naturalised French citizen, and long a sinister figure in the shady walks of political and financial journalism in Paris. He notoriously lived not upon what his many ephemeral scandal sheets printed, but on the price exacted for his silence. Joucla, a stupid lout; whose spelling was to say the least of it unconventional, also called himself a journalist. He was hard up, dazzled by the extravagance which he saw around him, envious of Almeyreda with his motor cars, villas, and fine ladies, and ready to do any odd bit of dirty work that came his way.

Two men from the managerial side of the paper were also in the pen, while M. Leymarie, a high civil official, former head of the *Sûreté Générale*,

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the Scotland Yard of France, and with M. Malvy, ruler of the Ministry of the Interior, was accommodated with a seat outside the dock.

Duval, editor, manager, and prime mover in Germany's interests, revealed himself as a giant among pygmies, and yet seldom has a man so utterly dull in appearance played with such signal success the chief part in a famous trial. Everything about his physique drooped. Prison fare and anxiety made his clothes sag around him. His eyelids drooped as though with boredom. His hair was thin and sandy. His moustaches fell in a downward curve, followed by every line and weary wrinkle on his face. His voice was tired, his manner inert and his gestures were flabby. If jelly-fish ever grow middle-aged they must look as Duval did during the early part of his trial. While his fellow-accused listened with strained attention to Lieutenant Mornet's outline of the case against them, Duval sat there listless, every now and then making a gesture of impatience, as though to ask if it were really necessary to go into all this over and over again.

But Duval, wearied by oft-repeated legal formalities, and Duval fighting, not so much for his life as to convince prosecutor, judges, court and the outside world that he was right in his politics and the rest of the world was wrong, were two

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different beings. He was one of the few men I have seen who ought never to have smiled. Duval dull was bearable, but Duval with his wrinkles still drooping in a sly, sardonic smile was a hateful spectacle. He had the rictus of the drowned. And the terrible thing about his smiles was that they were meant to be benevolent, for Duval was a great man, a master-mind, and had for the errors of human frailty the forgiveness of all knowledge. He was a monument of embittered, cynical conceit and mental arrogance.

He accepted as his due with one of those rare smiles the prosecution's comparison between himself and Aristophanes.

As a general rule the agents in such enterprises are moved by ambition, greed, or the necessities arising from extravagant and disordered lives. Duval, one of the blackest, and certainly the cleverest traitor brought to book in France during the war, was singular in that every inquiry into his private life gave additional proof that he had no vices and no past. His presence at the *Bonnet Rouge* was all the more extraordinary, for there nearly all the staff lived viciously and riotously. Duval lived respectably. He was fond of his home life, and even when he was in control of hundreds of thousands of francs, his scale of life was in no way altered. His wife remained at her hard-

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worked and ill-paid job as linen-maid at Lari-boisière Hospital. The couple went on living in a very small flat at a rental of Frs. 1000 a year. His father was still kept in the Jusserand Alms-houses. Duval continued to be as ill-clad and in every way as inconspicuous as he had ever been. He remained the perfect type of the hard-working, 'bus-travelling under-clerk. Despite wide general culture, great talents, and a feverish desire to get the world to take him at his own valuation, success had passed him by. He had no desire to play a social rôle. His wife, to whom he was devoted, in a somewhat ironical manner, was completely illiterate. Wealth had no special attractions for him, but when he came to the *Bonnet Rouge* he tasted the sweetness of power, and was able to work off his spite against a generation and a country so blind as to have overlooked his intellectual superiority. He traced his own moral portrait when he admitted to his secretary: 'Formerly I was a very frank fellow, and now life has made of me a monster of hypocrisy.'

Embittered by failure, Duval offered Germany the services of a man. He was so eager to avenge himself upon the folk who had been blind enough to let his gifts pass by without notice, that he burned to exalt his country's shortcomings and failures, to magnify her disasters and deny her

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merits. How nearly his ferocious power of irony, which has a peculiarly strong hold over French minds, brought his country to disaster will probably never be known, but this much is certain, that of all such tools used by Germany to dishearten France, to foment strikes and mutinies, to turn men's minds despairingly to dwell upon premature peace, the insignificant Duval came the nearest to success. His corroding pen spared nothing. Much of what he wrote in wartime, people have found to be true in twilight peace. He was far too clever to allow his brain to be drugged by official 'dope.' At the same time he was not clever enough to realise that an ordinary citizen who profits by the gross and cynical brutality of wartime government to show people that the history of their own times is a record of hoodwinking, flapdoodle and dishonesty, was bound to get into trouble, especially in a country which had taken *Jusqu'au bout* as its war slogan. Had Duval confined himself to revealing a portion of truth, even prematurely, to his readers he would probably be alive to-day. Some folk suffer from that rare but eminently Christian virtue, chronic affection towards their enemies. The mere fact that Duval allowed his admiration for Germany's efforts to creep into his *Bonnet Rouge* articles, that he believed that a settlement with Germany

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would be a good thing for France, might have led to the suppression of his newspaper and to a lot of other repressive action being taken against him, but in such matter could be found no basis for any charge of treason.

Even in wartime a man has a moral right to run counter to the herd instinct, and to prove himself either a fool or a martyr by expressing disbelief in the infallibility of Cabinet Ministers and even of General Headquarters; but his martyrdom will not lead him to the stake nor his folly to the lunatic asylum. But when it can be proven that in the expression of those opinions he has behind him not only the moral, but also the financial assistance of the enemy, and is actively engaged with money furnished by the enemy in working for the defeat of his own country, then there can be but one end to the story.

Duval, throughout his trial, remained unshaken in his belief in himself. With able volubility he struggled to convince his silent military judges that he was right when he urged that a peace, other than that of utter exhaustion, would benefit France, and when he wrote that otherwise Britain and America would come out of the war with military and financial strength such as would give them a preponderant part at the Peace Conference,

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and enable them to treat France very much like a poor relation.

Such thoughts were not the peculiar property of Duval. There were many people who shared his bitter foresight. But, while they might think, and even whisper, thus in the Council Chamber, they realised how dangerously weakening such doubts would be if they ever obtained a hold upon the minds of men and women who had been subjected to a physical, mental and moral strain up till then unknown in history.

It was chiefly against Great Britain that Duval turned his deadly irony. The British troops were represented as looking upon war as a sort of sport, of allowing the French Army to fight and suffer at the Front while they swaggered about in the guise of conquerors in the rear, seducing the wives of French soldiers and generally living upon the fat of the land. The policy behind this was that at the end of the war France would be exhausted, while the carefully preserved British Army would be able to extort favourable peace terms even from her own Allies. Duval it was who so energetically spread abroad the idea that the British, once having occupied Calais and the Channel ports, could never evacuate them, and incredible though it may seem to British ears, this subtle fable obtained wide credence in the country districts of France.

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The material conditions under which Tommy and Poilu lived were bitterly contrasted. The British were represented as living in comfort and ease, lolling in back billets or tasting the pleasant joys of Paris leave, while the Frenchmen, ill-clad and ill-fed, heroically bore the burden of the day. Duval signed his articles M. Badin (Mr. Joker), and his readers were calmly assured that the country responsible for the war was Great Britain, and the only result of victory would be to replace Pan-Germanism by Pan-Britainism, Prussian militarism by British navalism.

Far more deadly than this attempt to undermine the trust in Great Britain was Duval's propaganda among French troops while at the Front or on leave in their homes. Why go on fighting hopelessly in furtherance of Britain's Macchiavelian policies, when satisfactory terms of peace, without loss of territory, could be obtained from the enemy, who intended to make Great Britain pay all the breakage of war? It is interesting in this connection to realise that Lissauer's 'Hymn of Hate' was given its wide publicity with the object of persuading both France and Russia that if they would sign a separate peace they would be reasonably treated.

These poisonous campaigns did not pass unnoticed. They were denounced by Léon Daudet,

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Maurice Barrès and other patriotic writers. They came under the watchful eye of the censor. Their effect upon the troops at the Front aroused the alarm of General Headquarters, who urged that vigorous action should be taken. It was all of no avail. In hundreds of cases the *Bonnet Rouge* ignored the censorship, and copies of the paper crying aloud for peace were dispatched to the Front, where propaganda led in May and June 1917 to extremely perilous unrest. Over one hundred battalions were affected by the wave of disgust and weariness so skilfully exploited by the *Bonnet Rouge*. The troops got thoroughly out of hand. Some units refused to budge when ordered up to relieve exhausted men in the line. Others attempted to march on Paris, and the woods in the surrounding countryside were full of deserters. Leave-trains for Paris had to be stopped and the men sent off to the provinces, so strong were their desire for peace and their intention to upset the Government. Yet so firm was the hold of the *Bonnet Rouge* gang over certain members of the Government, so ardent were the jealousies between the civil and military police organisations, that Duval was allowed to carry on his work unchecked until he had almost succeeded in his objects.

Rightly or wrongly, Caillaux and Malvy were regarded as the men who, in the event of defeat,

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would assume power. Caillaux, although barred from office by reason of his policies no less than by the scandal of Calmette's killing, nevertheless, as former Prime Minister and leader of a great party, still possessed great political influence. Malvy, as Minister of the Interior and head of the police in France, represented that influence in successive coalition Governments. Caillaux before the war had subsidised Almeyreda. Malvy, as Minister of the Interior, had subsidised his *Bonnet Rouge* from the Secret Service funds. Almeyreda was personally known to both men and used all his 'pull' on behalf of Duval and the *Bonnet Rouge*. Jealousy between civil and military secret police became so ardent that at times it looked almost as though the real war was being fought between the *Sûreté Générale*, M. Malvy's police, and the Intelligence Department of the Ministry of War. This internecine warfare singularly favoured the designs of the Bolos and the Duvals of wartime.

Duval during the war made about a dozen trips to Switzerland, and found it quite easy to overcome all passport difficulties, thanks to a friendly police, and to the direct intervention of M. Leymarie, the right hand of Malvy at the Ministry of the Interior.

On each of those journeys he conferred with

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Herr Marx, of Mannheim, who had, in fact, employed him in a very subordinate capacity before the war. Herr Marx, of Mannheim, was a banker whose interests were as widespread as his activities were mysterious. There were few *affaires* in which the hand, or at any rate the money, of Herr Marx was not to be found. Switzerland was the central battlefield of belligerent counter-spy work, of propaganda and corruption. There Marx acted as Paymaster-General of Germany's spy army. In so far as Swiss neutrality made it possible he practically set up a sign that he was a purchaser of treasonable souls. It was with money paid through him to Duval that the *Bonnet Rouge* was financed, but his activities were far from being limited to those of a paying cashier, for in the Caillaux case he proposed himself as Germany's agent for a discussion of peace terms with the former French Premier.

No evidence was forthcoming at the trial that Duval had previously been engaged in spying or propaganda work. He must, indeed, have appeared as being too utterly insignificant to call for any attention on the part of the police. He was a humble, ill-paid clerk in the Poor Relief Administration, and, like nearly every other minor French official, did what outside work he could get to balance the domestic budget.

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Through a municipal councillor, for whom he had done some electioneering work, he obtained a post as secretary of a syndicate formed to rival Monte Carlo, with a Casino at San Stefano. His salary was in no way commensurate with the dreams of wealth aroused by the prospective profits of a Turkish Monte Carlo. He was paid £10 a month and seems to have been quite happy to get it. Soon Germany, and notably Herr Marx, bought out all French interest in the deal, but Duval remained on, acting as Marx's man. The company went into liquidation, and in wartime, in 1915, the German Marx appointed as liquidators the Frenchman Duval and a couple of Swiss lawyers. Duval sought to establish that a sum of £20,000 he had received from Marx in the early months of 1914 was a reward for his activity on behalf of this moribund company, the coffers of which were completely empty by the following year. But, unfortunately for that superman Duval, logic and facts contradicted any such assertion. Here was Duval, on a salary of £120 a year, with an old father in the almshouse and his wife already worn out with hard work as a hospital linen-maid, receiving this stunning blow of good fortune and he breathes not a word of it to anyone. His father remains in the poorhouse, his wife continues to iron sheets at the hospital, and Duval himself goes

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on living in a mean street at a yearly rental of £40 without a servant.

'It's quite simple to explain that,' says the voluble Duval. 'My wife had her habits. She liked a modest, quiet life.' If he had told her that he had made £20,000 she would have dissuaded him from trying fortune again and would have insisted upon living upon this heaven-sent income. But, unluckily for the latter part of this explanation, arose the query: What did Duval do with the money? Did he invest it, speculate with it, or deposit it in a bank awaiting a favourable business opportunity? No, he left it with a Swiss hotel-keeper, to be locked up in the hotel safe, where it did not even produce a gilt-edged interest. Examination of the Swiss hotel books showed that it was in June 1915 and not in June 1914 that Duval received this first sum of 500,000 francs from Marx.

Cheques signed in Switzerland and in France showed that by February 1917 he had obtained at least a million francs from the same source.

Marx may have many reasons for self-reproach, but in Duval he can flatter himself that he found that rare animal, an honest traitor. The closest investigation of Duval's life failed to reveal that he personally had made any money out of his transactions with the enemy. Unlike Bolo Pasha,

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he had no crushing debts to pay off, and he used Germany's money for Germany's ends.

Before Duval's advent, the *Bonnet Rouge* was not a flourishing concern. The offices were badly furnished. Duval brought in armchairs and a policy. The synchronisation of his taking over management with the beginning of the defeatist campaign is remarkable. Also Duval, of course, had to meet the riotous bills of Almeyreda, who simultaneously launched out into the life of a rich man. Accounts were kept in a vague manner, and the only definite trace of a payment of Duval to the paper refers to a sum of 200,000 francs, but other evidence was there to show that much more than that of Marx's money was spent on the *Bonnet Rouge*. Duval also supported a number of other defeatist organs designed to appeal to specially fruitful centres for propaganda among folk with international minds, to school teachers and extreme Socialist Radicals.

The activities of all this press, in conjunction with the more direct action of agitators in meetings and the wide distribution of stop-the-war pamphlets, must be held to be mainly responsible for the French mutinies of 1917 and that result alone, from the German point of view, was well worth the money. It was achieved very largely by the caustically ironic press of 'The Joker.' His was

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grim and bitter joking. M. Badin reserved all his venom for the British. He fought against the idea that future generations should be taught to hate Germany, but thought it advisable that the actual generation should mistrust the British. 'I am a fervent anglophile,' he wrote in 1916. 'In all sincerity, when so many people look upon war as a tragedy, when others see in it a cataclysm, I admire those who like to look upon it as physical exercise.'

The same ironic humour with the same signature appeared in the *Bonnet Rouge* three days later. 'A few carping souls are annoyed because our brave poilus are not as well clothed as our Allies. They forget that our men belong to the family and are not guests. Our soldiers know full well that in pleasure resorts they must take a back seat and discreetly make room for their guests. What of it? Can't they get that all back again on the battlefield, where they can proudly take the front places? But don't let anyone suspect me of insinuating that the fine, stout, well-cared-for soldiers who wear the Allied colours in their warlike caps forget in the delights of cities the rude call to arms. They are only resting and enjoying themselves so that they may be able to come to our help and take the place of our men who have fallen.'

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Three further quotations will suffice to show the ingenuity of Duval's badinage and treachery.

'Our workmen are delighted with the state of things. Even the humblest dwellings are festooned with Allied flags. Fresh flowers are every morning strewn before our generals' portraits. Cereals are so plentiful that the poultry are being fed on grain and the cattle on bread. Meat and vegetables are coming in such quantities as to turn the consumer's stomach. The fact that no coal is to be found is due to the warlike ardour of the whole nation making superfluous the supply of any other combustible. A final fact reassures us of the imminent and definite destruction of our adversaries. The penguins are mobilising and are getting ready to declare war on Germany.'

'Hearing that the English were vigorously bombarding the German lines and had cut them at several points, but without committing the imprudence of occupying them, I thought of asking a few intimate friends to a celebration of this great event. But I was dissuaded by the first friend I consulted, who said: "Your enthusiasm is premature. What you take for the beginning of an offensive is merely the beginning of pressure. The Allies have piled up guns and shells for a year past and you don't think that they are going to squander them? Away with such foolhardy pre-

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cipitation. We have not only accumulated stocks of war material, but we have also stores of patience; let us increase these latter. Don't mislead yourself; put off your dinner until the country is freed. Moreover, you know there's no hurry. Our poilus have adapted themselves wonderfully to their troglodyte existence. Civilians too have arranged for a war of indefinite duration. So there's no need to hasten the end. In any case, when the honour of applying pressure falls to the lot of our English friends, you may count upon their acting with the coldness and calmness of their temperament. Let there be no foolhardiness."'

'I have always thought that a sudden change in the habits of individuals and of peoples is a great danger. For instance, if peace broke out now, just when we are really beginning to settle down to war, it would throw State and private affairs into the most regrettable confusion. Think of our soldiers. They are too enamoured of the noble profession of arms to admit for an instant the desirability of an early return to their homes and ordinary occupations.'

Day after day, week after week, for over a year this poisonous venom spurted from the pen of Duval, between his visits to Switzerland to discuss matters with his German employers. From each of these journeys he returned to Paris with a fat

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cheque. His last journey proved disastrous. He was searched at the Franco-Swiss frontier and a cheque for 150,000 francs was found upon him and sent to Paris for a decision to be taken in the matter.

The fact remained hidden until 7th July, when it was revealed by the Prime Minister, M. Ribot, in reply to Maurice Barrès in the Chamber of Deputies. It was not until the trial of Duval and his associates that it became known that during those three weeks of silence M. Leymarie had given instructions for the cheque to be returned to Duval, thus apparently protecting him against any proceedings. M. Barrès defeated this attempt at hushing up the scandal. A few weeks later the whole gang was under lock and key. Almeyreda was dead and the stop-gap Painlevé Ministry which followed upon Malvy's resignation had already given way to that of Clémenceau, who came to power supported by the whole country in his determination to destroy treason root and branch.

Duval was sentenced to death and shot at Vincennes on 17th July 1918. His six collaborators shared thirty-five years of hard labour and imprisonment between them.

Malvy was forced to resign from the Government at the outset of the case, and his own arrest followed, paving the way to the long-drawn-out proceedings against M. Joseph Caillaux.

CHAPTER FOUR

MALVYISM

THERE was considerable discussion between French General Headquarters and the Government as to the exact wording of the announcement of the victory of the Marne. The Republic as a régime desired to share in the laurels bestowed upon the victorious armies of France, so a phrase was inserted to remind all Frenchmen that those armies had been 'prepared by the Republic.' The importance attached to the point may seem absurd to a country with long-stabilised institutions. No one would dream of proclaiming that Zeebrugge was the outcome of the monarchical system. But in France, where changes of régime have been frequent and rapid, the Third Republic, which was not fifty years of age when the war broke out, felt it necessary to neglect no opportunity of sharing in any glory that might be wandering about without an owner. There are still a great many Frenchmen who feel that this official claim is, to say the least, exaggerated, and

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that if France won the war, it was probably in spite of the Third Republic and certainly in spite of the *République des Camarades* so trenchantly portrayed by that talented writer, de Jouvenel.

The Third Republic, in a national position much weaker than that of Great Britain, had been pursuing a foreign policy which, however legitimate, was, nevertheless, distinctly pushing. Just as Great Britain embarked upon a Continental policy, the ultimate test of which was likely to be found in war, without really preparing for that moment, so France was caught napping with her land preparations, and it took her far-sighted Republic many months to bring heavy artillery into action, the plans and programmes of which had for years filled pigeon-holes in the Ministry of War. It was not so much the last button that was missing this time, it was the gaiters themselves. Transport was as old-fashioned as the artillery, medical and commissariat services were very inadequately equipped. Indeed, in the early days of the war, it looked as though the French Army had never heard of a motor car.

That the French Army withstood the dreadful disillusionment of those early days, that their officers stood firm, was in no special degree the outcome of a Republic which for years had made the army a playground for politicians. Only the

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granite of national qualities could have resisted such corrosive influence as that exerted by the *République des Camarades* – a practice of government by blackmail, corruption, and false good-fellowship, which undermined the purity of justice, the honesty of public service, and led to the growth of rival political clientèles within State administrations, of which it would be hard to find the equal in the most corrupt of Anglo-Saxon municipal politics.

The absorbing aspect of an *affaire* in France is that it usually takes one lid right off, and with a bang, and in sympathy, all the other lids open up, and the whole cuisine becomes apparent to anyone who cares to study it. Thus the Dreyfus case, which began with the question of an alleged traitor's guilt or innocence, became a fight between Jews and Christians, to end in a prolonged struggle between Radicalism and Conservatism.

In the same way, in the trial of Malvy, it was the whole cynical system of loose living, laxness and complaisance that characterised Radical Republican Governments that was at stake, rather than the future of the man himself. The faith of political opportunism, of the glad hand and the winking eye, emerged from the ordeals of war considerably battered, and if ever there was a Republican who should have blushed to claim a

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share in the preparation of French victories, that man was certainly Malvy, who, throughout the war, was Minister of the Interior. Malvy's whole political fortune was bound up with that of Caillaux and the Radical Socialist party, of which he was the leader before the war. Malvy's rise to political power was extremely rapid, but he could not 'stand his oats.' He was of the true opportunist type. Many fantastic stories were told of him during the war. He was, quite falsely, held to have had Mata Hari, the famous Dutch spy, as his mistress. Malvy was represented as a *noceur*, as a man who gave himself up to debauch of all sorts in houses of public ill-fame. He was held to be a heavy gambler; in fact, a man whose general mode of life was dissolute. There was in all this gossip much exaggeration and some truth.

Malvy, back from his sentence of banishment, and President of the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, still plays from time to time his system at Monte Carlo. In the old days he played poker, and there was more than one session of that exhilarating game at the Ministry of the Interior during the war. At some of Malvy's poker-parties were men who afterwards were tried for treason.

At the very outset of war, when the Government was in Bordeaux, M. Malvy, Minister of

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the Interior, head of the police, guardian of the morals of his country, was involved in a liaison which ended tragically in a funeral.

None of this should make a man liable to a charge of treason. It may seem unfortunate that so important a Minister, in a moment of such crisis for his country as that of war, should find time to play poker and carry on his usual careless and somewhat reprehensible peace-time life; but in that there is no proof of treason, nor is there any basis for the making of such a charge.

Léon Daudet, who, throughout the war, acted with the same lack of measure and the same infallible *flair* in smelling out treason with which the hunters of the Inquisition smoked out heresy, first began the attack upon Malvy. Voicing in April 1917 a widespread feeling that there was no Government, he asked in his Royalist paper, *L'Action française*, what was the mysterious power that blunted when it did not avert the sword of justice in dealing with defeatism, who it was who allowed suspect foreigners of enemy origin to circulate without let or hindrance throughout France and to get passports for abroad.

The following two months – May and June – were the most critical France lived through. Soldiers became affected by the stream of pacifist propaganda which found them at the Front in the

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trenches, in the railway stations on their way home on leave, and finally in the villages themselves, where the ground had also been well sown.

Daudet's attacks became more and more virulent, but it was not until July, when Clémenceau opened his guns in the Senate, that Malvy's position was endangered. After Clémenceau's terrific onslaught, Malvy's continuance in office became an impossibility, and he resigned at the end of August. His departure from the Government, however, only served to increase the ardour of his assailants, and in particular of Léon Daudet, who, in October, sent the following letter to the President of the Republic: —

'I address myself to you because it is necessary that you should be warned of what is no longer a secret to many people, because you have a great part to play and can save France. M. Malvy, ex-Minister of the Interior, is a traitor. He has betrayed our country for the past three years with the complicity of M. Leymarie [afterwards sentenced in connection with the *Bonnet Rouge* gang] and some others. His treason is more than proved. It would take too long to show you the proofs. But you should know that M. Malvy has kept Germany informed of all our military and diplomatic plans, mainly through the band

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of spies of the *Bonnet Rouge*, and his friend Almeyreda. In this way Germany, to quote but one instance, knew point by point the plan for our attack on the Chemin des Dames immediately. M. Malvy was made a member of the War Committee of the Cabinet. You should also know that documents, the authenticity of which is beyond dispute, show the hand of M. Malvy and the *Sûreté Générale* in the military mutinies and tragic events of June 1917. It is for you to verify the accuracy of these accusations and to render rapid justice.'

The stupefaction caused by the production of this document at the tribune of the Chamber of Députés is easier to imagine than to describe. On the face of it the charge seemed utterly preposterous and yet . . . ! Rumour had long been busy with Malvy's name. He was the servant of Caillaux and connected with the infamous *Bonnet Rouge* gang. Clémenceau's onslaught, frank and brutal though it had been, had rather conveyed an impression that all had not been revealed. Léon Daudet, whom people had on the whole regarded as being a crank in his spy-hunting performances, had, nevertheless, been right in a disquieting number of cases. The country had just emerged from the perils of a

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moral collapse which might have led to another edition of the Commune with the same disastrous ending. Everywhere there were rumours of treachery being at work. The complicated machinery of government had shown ominous signs of breaking down under the tremendous strain of three years of warfare. Parliament was utterly discredited and knew it full well. A flabby Gladstone – Ribot had been followed at the head of the Ministry by an even flabbier Campbell-Bannerman – Painlevé, who was to hold the last Republican trench of power against the bogey-man of Parliament – the old tiger Clémenceau. Ribot's Ministry fell beneath the hammer-blows of Clémenceau upon Malvy. Painlevé had to evacuate after the Daudet letter and hand over the position to Clémenceau. Malvy himself asked that he should be placed upon his trial for treason on the charges brought by Daudet. Public opinion and the army demanded imperatively that light should be let in to the dark places of government.

None but a fanatic could believe that M. Malvy, bad as was his personal reputation, could wittingly have acted as a spy for Germany in the direct and concrete fashion put forward by the impetuous Daudet. But there were many who feared that in the exercise of his office, by the people with whom he was surrounded, and by the general spirit of

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the *République des Camarades*, it was perhaps possible that vitally important information had reached Germany. There were many more who believed that Malvy, although administering one of the chief departments of war government, had failed to appreciate the gravity of his decisions, and had allowed personal and political considerations, rather than concern for victory, to influence his acts.

Léon Daudet's charges were not retained by the prosecution. The gravest of them declared that Malvy had kept the Germans informed of every step made for the preparation of the ill-fated Nivelle offensive of April 1917. Daudet's information on this point came to him from a M. Bornat, who, indeed, on the eve of that ill-starred attack made a report on the matter to the French military authorities. It took M. Bornat a year to identify his informant, who was a grocer, and had been told the story by a passing Catholic priest who has never been discovered.

M. Daudet was quite right in stating that the Germans knew when, where, and how the attack was to be delivered. German General Headquarters possessed eyes and ears with which to see the massing of French divisions on the Champagne Front and to hear the indiscreet cacklings of every 'well-informed' *salon* of Paris as to the opposition

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to Nivelle's plan of the Minister of War and of many highly-placed generals. There had even been a long and detailed discussion in the Army Committee of the Chamber of the chances of success of a surprise (!) attack on the Chemin des Dames and the best use to make of artillery in the operations. Earlier in the year detailed instructions had been sent to the British Army and to all French generals on the Front. The plan was discussed nightly in trench and billet, and in order to give his officers and men full confidence, General Nivelle let them share more fully than was customary in the intentions of the Higher Command.

It is impossible to group 1,200,000 men and some 500,000 horses and to prepare roads, accumulate guns and munitions of all sorts without the enemy becoming aware that something is stirring. Moreover, a few days before the offensive started, a French sergeant was taken by the Germans in a raid, and on him was found a detailed description of the plan for the capture of Fort Brimont, together with divisional positions along a large part of the Front. Never had there been an offensive so well advertised, and it was by no means necessary for the Germans to search for a member of the French Cabinet to tell them what was practically common knowledge throughout

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France, or to show them what was going on underneath their own eyes on the French side of the line.

The High Court of the Senate, while rejecting Daudet's specific accusations, nevertheless examined the general charge brought against Malvy of having by neglect of his duty as a Minister of the Republic jeopardised the safety of the country. In other words, he was tried for sins of omission and commission which, while undoubtedly serious, were not treasonable. His policy and his morality rather than his patriotism were called into question.

Malvy as a young lawyer deputy had a rapid rise to political fame, thanks to Caillaux, whose return to power he had assisted by a timely interpellation in the Chamber. He remained in successive Cabinets as Minister of the Interior and as representative of M. Caillaux. The chief job of the Minister of the Interior is to look after the public and secret policies of the country, to watch over Royalists, Socialists, Anarchists, Anti-militarists, Communists, and, above all, to use an organism, the flexibility of which would make the hair of any British Home Secretary stand on end, in such a way that all scandals affecting his political friends are decently squashed, and that if any political opponents are found straying from the path of strict morality or honesty, either a

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record of their offences may be kept for future use or the scandal may become as big as possible. For there is a lot of cloak and dagger work even to-day about politics in France. M. Barthou, for instance, who is a member of that staid body, the *Académie Française*, when he left the Ministry of Justice took with him a little scrap of paper about the scandalous ease with which Rochette, an arch-swindler, escaped from justice for a time owing to Caillaux's intervention. Barthou in his good time produced that scrap of paper in the Chamber of Deputies, just after the murder of Gaston Calmette by Madame Caillaux. This habit of collecting information about one's political friends is very widespread. Every politician of eminence has his own collection, any self-respecting newspaper office bulges with dossiers of the sort, and the Prefecture of Police is full to overflowing with them.

The power naturally enjoyed by a Minister of the Interior in control of the police is magnified by France's centralised system of government, which, through the departmental prefects, gives him a preponderant voice in every phase of provincial life. This system worked without doing much apparent harm in peace-time, but when it was applied to war conditions, it became infinitely dangerous.

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France, being a much-trying Continental nation, naturally had devoted a considerable amount of thought to the critical period of mobilisation. For years Anarchists, Socialists and Radicals, some of them French and others vaguely cosmopolitan, had preached anti-militarism. They had sought to undermine the national patriotism of the army. They had, to use the phrase of a man since converted, Gustave Hervé, 'planted the flag on a muck-heap'; they recommended sabotage of mobilisation, and had, indeed, drawn up plans whereby certain important railway bridges were to be destroyed and the assembly of the French armies delayed. The names and whereabouts of most of these gentry, as well as a number of suspect spies, both French and foreign, had been put upon a 'little list,' as being due for arrest immediately mobilisation was ordered.

This list had been drawn up by services in M. Malvy's charge and to him devolved the duty of deciding what action to take on it. That decision involved the establishment of a principle in which nearly all the treason and defeatism trials of France had their origin. M. Malvy, with the approval of the Cabinet, determined to trust the rabble which figured in the *Carnet B*. This list included some three thousand names of Frenchmen, some of them associated with Labour

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organisations of the extremist wing, some hundreds of foreigners, and a few score of Frenchmen suspect of being enemy agents. The foreigners were arrested and the remainder was allowed in liberty, thanks mainly to the activity of Almeyreda of the *Bonnet Rouge* gang.

Almeyreda was of the type of adventurer who could only flourish in a Latin, or perhaps a Balkan, country. His past record does not at first sight seem to fit him to be a friend of any Home Secretary in any country. His official career was baldly set forth in that very same *Carnet B*, where Almeyreda, perhaps not altogether for alphabetical reasons, was among the first whose arrest was to follow mobilisation.

1900: Two months for theft.

1901: One year for illegal possession of explosives.

1905: Three years for inciting troops to mutiny.

1907: Six weeks for rebellion and carrying prohibited weapons.

1908: Two years for insulting the army and inciting to mutiny.

1913: Four months for assault.

1914: (January) two months for assault.

1914: (April) fifteen days for assault.

On the face of this his acquaintance with the

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Home Secretary might have been expected to be distant or purely official. But by some means or other Almeyreda before the war found the capital with which to start a weekly journal, violently pro-German and radical in tone, and when he took up the cudgels for Madame Caillaux's defence, he found a patron and a friend in Joseph Caillaux, who supported his rag with money and with influence. It was, moreover, Almeyreda who recruited the famous Corsican band of bravadoes and thugs of every character who acted as Caillaux's bodyguard during his wife's trial.

It was through Caillaux that Almeyreda was placed in contact with Malvy, and he soon became accepted by the Minister as representing the labouring classes of France. By this time he had converted his sheet into a daily paper and was subsidised by Malvy from Secret Service funds. He had also frightened money out of other people who had reason to fear a newspaper campaign against their interests, and by this and less reputable methods of blackmail was enabled to satisfy his disordered appetite for pleasure. He had an apartment in town, two villas in the country, a couple of motor cars and two mistresses. His life was openly dissipated, for he was fond of being seen in the most expensive restaurants of Paris dining in company with the *grande cocotte*

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who happened to be most fashionable at the moment. His health was undermined by his mode of life; drugs and perhaps fear were robbing him of his theatrical good looks.

When mobilisation was ordered Almeyreda hastened to the Minister of the Interior to ask how he could get into the army. As Clémenceau drily remarked, he only needed to ask a policeman for the nearest recruiting office. Malvy urged him to stay in Paris, where his help would be required in dealing with a number of labour problems. Almeyreda besought Malvy to refrain from action on the 'B' list and, after a day's consultations with his Anarchist friends, undertook to guarantee that they would observe a thoroughly patriotic attitude. Malvy, in return for that promise, instructed his police to leave all save the foreigners on the list in quiet. His decision was grave. That it was justified is shown by the fact that whereas Government estimated as probable about thirteen per cent. of absentees from the first period of mobilisation, the figure reached only one-half per cent. All went well for a time. Anarchists and anti-militarists were silent until after the first battle of the Marne, when Germany sought to gain by propaganda what she had failed to achieve in battle. Gradually, towards the close of 1914, the old anti-patriotic agitation came to life again,

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and spread with a rapidity remarkable in a country the Government of which required no special Dora regulations to strengthen its powers.

All this renewed activity corresponded exactly with Germany's first efforts to destroy France from within. Almeyreda's own evolution began at the end of 1914, and by the spring of 1915 his *Bonnet Rouge* was already more than suspect. It continued, however, to be subsidised by Malvy until February 1916, when he was ordered by M. Briand, then Prime Minister, to stop his support. Almeyreda throughout that time, and, indeed, until the eve of his arrest, was received either by the Minister himself or by his right hand man, M. Leymarie, the head of the *Sûreté Générale*. Malvy's explanation that the gaolbird Vigo (who chose himself the name of 'Almeyreda' because it contains an anagram descriptive of his character) was necessary to him, is 'a grotesque libel on the labouring classes, who knew well that he was playing the rôle of informer and of mediator, and suspected with equal reason that he was also a traitor to his country.

By 1916 Malvy should have been thoroughly well aware of Almeyreda's character, upon which the heads of his own police had reported in most unfavourable terms. Yet nothing was done to put a check to his activities and to those of his

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companions on the 'B' list who in 1915 and 1916, through the printing press, by personal propaganda in factories, and by meetings, so weakened moral that there were serious labour disturbances throughout the country and large bodies of the best troops of France were ripe for mutiny.

CHAPTER FIVE

MUTINY

WHEN millions of men are herded together in every conceivable circumstance of wretchedness trouble of some kind or other is bound to result. In every army in Europe there were cases of men, wearied of the 'plum and apple' of their particular country, revolting against the stupidity of war. It is irksome to a man who has been told that he is fighting for freedom to find himself treated as a potential gaolbird by a tactless military policeman, and looked upon not so much like an infant in arms as like a boy at a reformatory school. Such outbreaks were mainly due to local causes and were quickly ended by a display of reasonable discipline. Very different were the mutinies in the French Army in 1917. They were on a scale and of a character which showed clearly that they were due, not so much to justifiable discontent among the troops, as to a general campaign of well-directed activity.

The story of those mutinies was one of the best-

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kept secrets of the war. Had Germany known in time what was happening behind the Champagne Front the world's history would have been singularly altered. Even to-day no detailed record has been published of a movement which threatened for a moment to lead to a collapse of the French Front similar to that which took Russia to Brest-Litovsk and Germany to Versailles. So well guarded was the secret that Paris was blissfully unaware of the fact that a large number of mutineers had started to march from the Front to the capital, with the avowed object of overturning the Government and making a rapid if shameful peace.

Much of the responsibility for the weak moral which made these mutinies possible was placed upon Malvy's shoulders. The disturbances occurred in May and June 1917, but for months before then General Headquarters had drawn attention to the effect on troops of the 'defeatist' propaganda carried on throughout the country and at the Front itself. Malvy remained true to the political principle which had led him to suspend the working of List 'B' on the outbreak of war. He refused to see that from 1915 onwards his attitude of tolerance had been interpreted as a sign of weakness, and, in spite of urgent representations from the army and from officials of his own

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department, Anarchists, Communists and social rebels of every hue were allowed to flood the country with revolutionary pamphlets shrieking for peace at any price, to organise strikes in munition factories and openly preach revolution.

It is obvious that such a campaign would have been completely sterile had things gone well at the Front. Revolution is nearly always caused by the skilful exploitation of despair. The machinery for such exploitation was built under the eyes and at times even with the encouragement of M. Malvy, Minister of the Interior, and events on the Western Front in the spring of 1917 gave that machine an excellent opportunity of showing its capacity as a maker of revolution.

Each year the armies had nerved themselves with a growing sense of helpless misery to the prospect of yet another winter campaign. The flagging spirits of the French Army during the winter of 1916-17 had been buoyed up by the hope, if not by the promise, that in the spring a final convulsive effort would achieve rapid victory. There was a new Commander-in-Chief. New tactics were going to be employed. The old days of nibbling offensives, with their apparently fruitless loss of life, were gone; the zero hour of spring would set every belfry in France rocking with the chimes of peace; the enemy line would be

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rolled up and the road to Berlin would lie wide open before the feet of triumphant France. Troops were put through a drastic moral training. As the time for the offensive drew nigh their hopes were raised to the *n*th degree. The men were exhorted even more than Cæsar's legions in the Army Orders of their *Generalissimo*. Every officer became an optimist and sought to spread the cheeriness of General Headquarters among his troops, and it was in reasonably good fettle that a start was made on the great adventure at six o'clock in the morning of 16th April 1917. After the first glow of hope the sickening fact became clear that this offensive was going to be no more successful than its predecessors. Within a few hours from the start reports came from every section of the field telling of delay, of trouble with machine-gun nests, or of undestroyed wire.

By the end of the week France had captured many prisoners and guns, but had only reached Germany's second line. The German Front refused to be pierced, its flanks would not be rolled up. While civilians, impressed by official bulletins and by large captures of men and material, believed in victory, the poilus, many of whom had been fighting for four or five months without leave, grew desperately angry. They knew only too well how far performance panted after promise.

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Their doubts and discouragement became acute when failure had to be admitted, and within another week the whole grandiose scheme had to be abandoned. Men who had been led to believe that within a week or so they would be swinging along the road to the Rhine found themselves faced with a return to soul-destroying trench warfare, with all its circumstances of misery and abnegation.

There was nothing surprising in the mutinies that followed, save perhaps their moderation. French losses during the six or seven weeks in which this offensive petered out and came to deadlock were as heavy as the cost to the French Army of the whole of the four months of the battle of the Somme. Had the offensive been only moderately victorious the poilu would have gritted his teeth and carried on without a murmur, and the growing effervescence among the civilian population behind the line, and particularly among the women, would have died away.

An adversary's success cannot be exploited in a defeatist sense. But it is equally true that the chief aim of propaganda is to create an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion, so that, when, and if, things do go wrong, what may only be a temporary reverse in the field may be converted by a moral offensive upon a well-prepared terrain

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into definite and disastrous defeat. Germany, as was her right, had systematically prepared for just such an opportunity.

Already, at the end of 1916, the French Commander-in-Chief was seriously alarmed by the effects of pacifist and revolutionary propaganda among his troops, and in drawing the attention of the Minister of the Interior to the necessity of taking repressive action he wrote then of the possibility of mutiny in the army.

M. Malvy was made personally aware of the danger by a series of strikes which spread with the wayward rapidity of bush fires. They started unexpectedly in the Paris dressmakers' workshops, where the *midinettes*, who are such a charming feature of the Paris scene, suddenly 'downed needles.' For a few days Paris watched with tender amusement processions of these pert and pretty proletarians. Students rallied to the support of their traditional friends, and their example was followed by numbers of young soldiers, who saw no harm whatever in having an amusing time walking about the boulevards with their arms round a pretty girl's waist. At the beginning the whole thing was charmingly reminiscent of the best romantic school of Mürger and Charpentier. Louise and Mimi Pinson were again to the fore. But very quickly matters became more serious.

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Professional agitators appeared with increasing frequency at the girls' meetings. A number of foreign and extremely suspect individuals came to the fore. The Government was in an unhappy position. Ridicule would have been its portion had it acted with severity towards these young and charming creatures. But when men on leave and in uniform started addressing strikers' meetings in inflammatory language, when a large body of Treasury officials struck for higher pay, when thousands of men refused work in war factories throughout the country, and revolutionary stop-the-war meetings were a daily occurrence, it might have been expected that even a Minister of the Interior would have been able to read the writing on the wall.

Nothing was done, and the man at the Front, sick and sorry with the failure of the offensive, had to fight also the depression caused by such news from home. By the end of May the French Front in the Champagne, the scene of General Nivelle's ill-fated attack, started to crack. At a number of points discipline entirely broke down. Quantities of wine were distributed to the men (it was never discovered by whom) and they got thoroughly out of hand. Billet after billet was visited by men, and even by officers, who had commandeered motor lorries to spread mutiny.

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They waved the Red Flag, howled the Internationale, and called upon their comrades to join them in upsetting the Government so as to get peace.

Battalions coming down, listless and shattered, from the Front carried their demoralisation with them. As the outbreaks spread exaggerated reports as to what had happened and was going to happen sped from trench to trench, from sector to sector, until no less than sixteen divisions, including some of the finest in the army, were contaminated, and the safety of the whole Front was imperilled.

Field-Marshal Pétain, in reporting on these mutinies at the end of May, before they reached their full development, definitely established a connection between the propaganda carried on among the working classes and that which spread among the troops at the Front.

'In a general manner,' he wrote, 'these demonstrations do not seem to be directed against the Higher Command but against the Government. The men say: "We have nothing against our officers. It's the Government. Our womenfolk are starving to death. Our wives are being bayoneted in Paris. The Government has refused Germany's peace offer." There was the cry of *La Révolution*. What are the causes of this dangerous effervescence?

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- '(1) The pamphlets distributed to troops in Paris railway stations.
- '(2) *Agents provocateurs* who in uniforms of other corps slipped into billets.
- '(3) Contact with Russian brigades, which at that time were almost completely controlled by regimental Soviets.
- '(4) Newspaper campaign in favour of Soviet Revolution and of extended leave for French troops.
- '(5) The hope of escaping with slight punishment aroused by excessive restrictions placed upon courts-martial.
- '(6) Growth of drunkenness in the army.
- '(7) The attitude of mobilised men and some officers behind the lines towards pacifist meetings. Men at the Front knew that such offences escaped practically without punishment.
- '(8) Strikes in Paris.

'In short the movement is deeply rooted throughout the country.

'The position may become very grave at any moment and I cannot too strongly insist upon energetic measures being taken.'

Among the energetic measures recommended were the immediate arrest of the distributors of

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sedition pamphlets to men on leave, a closer control of the Press, the dispatch to the Front of all officers and men and mobilised workmen attending pacifist meetings in the rear and general, immediate repression.

Thus it is clear that, while disappointment with the results of the Nivelle offensive no doubt played a part, Marshal Pétain saw in the mutinies a direct result of a political campaign, organised and directed from behind the army zone with a view to bringing about a premature peace. Searching inquiry carried out by the seventy-five courts-martial which dealt with the ringleaders showed how front and rear acted and reacted one upon another and that both were subjected to the same campaign and the same moral tension.

The Front was saturated with printed matter pointing out that Russia was heading straight for a separate peace. Men were led to believe by the alarming outbreak of strikes of a revolutionary nature that France, too, was on the eve of collapse.

Various incidents which brought Annamite and Chinese labour troops into conflict with Parisian working people were grossly distorted. So as to play upon the ignorant suspicion of weary men at the Front, they were told that the Annamite troops were stationed in Paris as the Government

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felt that it could count upon them to deal pitilessly with any rising. Postal control showed that the worst affected districts of France were St. Etienne, the Birmingham of the country, Lyons, and the industrial quarters of the capital. Men returning from leave from those regions reflected the local state of feeling. They had attended revolutionary meetings with the apparent sanction of the police and they brought 'to their comrades at the Front the encouragement of the men in the rear in working for a general rising.'

The rapidity and clemency with which order was restored at the Front are a tribute to the inherent virtues of the French soldier and to the wisdom of Marshal Pétain. Just under thirty mutineers were shot after trial, and more than one of them on his way to dishonourable death expressed his shame and admitted the justice of his sentence by shouting as his last words, '*Vive la France.*'

CHAPTER SIX

MALVY'S RESPONSIBILITY

LÉON DAUDET, by his brutal accusation of treason against Malvy, raised the whole question of that Minister's activities while in office during the war. No one believed, in the Chamber of Deputies or elsewhere, that Malvy had been guilty of such deliberate treason as was understood in the charge of communicating to Germany the plans of the Nivelle offensive. But everybody was conscious of the fact that Malvy, as Minister of the Interior, had covered a multitude of sins. Radical-Socialists had seen through the summer, with growing apprehension, that the term of their power was being reached, and they feared (some of them with good reason) the advent to office of the ruthless Clemenceau. When Clemenceau took the reins of government he cast the net of his inquiry very widely over the political seas; and when he had drawn Malvy into that net the High Court of France, which is constituted by the Senate, had to decide, among other questions, how

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far Malvy, as Minister of the Interior, could be held responsible for the mutinies on the French Front.

Malvy was tried by serene senators. The history of France is full of object-lessons in the advisability of not guillotining your political opponents. Malvy's trial, like Bolo's, might have been held before a court-martial; but then a court-martial was so divorced from any question of political finesse that it might have sentenced him to death. Clemenceau wisely preferred to have the ex-Minister of the Interior tried by his political peers.

Technically, the Senate had to judge Malvy on Daudet's direct charges of treason. Broadly speaking, it held a roving inquiry into Malvy's general administration of the Home Office, and in particular into his responsibility for the mutinies of 1917. This inquiry showed that, while the world imagined the war to be one between France and Germany, in France herself, among certain classes of officials, it was looked upon as being a struggle between the Ministries of Interior and of War, of civil against military power, of reaction, as represented by the military mind, against radicalism, in the shape of Caillaux's henchman, Malvy.

One of the bitter by-products of the Dreyfus

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case was the destruction of the peace-time organisation of Army Intelligence. But, on the outbreak of hostilities, all the police powers of the Home Office were transferred to the military authority, and in each military district a 'Second Bureau' was organised to deal with spies, counter-spies, and the surveillance of suspect foreigners. This hastily reconstructed machinery had a cloud of Secret Service men drawn from the police, who themselves were removed from the authority of the Home Secretary to that of the Ministry of War. At the start everything went smoothly. The police and military authorities worked loyally together until Desclaux, the former private secretary of Caillaux, was condemned to seven years' imprisonment for petty but odious crime. As Paymaster-General of the Army, Desclaux had stooped to pilfer military stores for the benefit of his mistress, a well-known Paris dressmaker, at whose house army hams and groceries of every kind were delivered by the vanload. Caillaux, who was then in South America, saw in Desclaux's sentence a political blow aimed at himself, and his lieutenant, Malvy, Minister of the Interior, apparently shared that view. From that moment onwards war was declared between the military and the civilian police sections of national defence.

Not only was the action of the military author-

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ities hindered by the civilian police, by every means that a red-tape mind could suggest, but Malvy also succeeded, at the beginning of 1916, in limiting military power to such an extent that the army itself became entirely dependent upon the Minister of the Interior for information and action with regard to defeatist and revolutionary campaigns. He, clinging to his first policy, refused to allow any proceedings to be taken even against most notorious revolutionary agitators. Straight-forward but bewildered officers, prefects, and even police officials whose duty it was to stamp out disaffection, found themselves helpless against the mysterious power labelled by Daudet *l'inexplorable*, in his ferocious campaign against Malvy.

How, indeed, could they hope to succeed when it was in vain that the French Commander-in-Chief himself asked for action to be taken? A month before the mutinies broke out he wrote that soldiers' letters showed that the agitation came from behind the lines. 'The number of men involved is increasing. The majority is not yet affected, but the troops are anxious and uneasy. For over a year past tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers preaching peace have got to the Front. There is now a raging epidemic of them. More of them are intercepted now in a fortnight than were seized in three months a year ago. These tracts

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come from the *Libertaire*, the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations, the Syndicalist Defence Committee, the Metal-workers' Federation, the Teachers' Union, and chiefly from the Anarchists – Sebastian Faure, Merrheim, and Hubert, who seem to be the directors of this intensive and detestable propaganda. Their letters, and the part to be played by their correspondents at the Front, show that a big pacifist movement is to be started on May-day. [May first is Labour Day in France, and the strikes in Paris and the provinces which alarmed the whole country during the spring were to synchronise with mutinies in the army which, however, only began three weeks later.] This pacifist agitation must be stopped; otherwise the moral will be endangered.'

This was by no means the first warning given to Monsieur Malvy that his clients of 'B' list had failed to carry out their part of the bargain. Reports of their ominous activities had reached the Ministry of the Interior at the beginning of 1915; and they came, not from vague and irresponsible spy-maniacs, but from provincial prefects and provincial and metropolitan police heads, as well as from the *Sûreté Générale*. They were all communicated to Malvy; yet, with complete immunity, notorious individuals, such as Merrheim and Sebastian Faure, appealed without let

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or hindrance to the working classes not to allow themselves to be sacrificed for England and Capitalism. Plans for rounding up these agitators, and closing their illegal printing presses, never got beyond the pigeon-hole stage in the Home Office. Monsieur Malvy always stayed authority's hand, on the ground that action could only stir up trouble among the proletariat.

This policy of the velvet glove which had no steel hand within it carried Monsieur Malvy very far indeed in his treatment of the Anarchists Faure and Mauricius. The latter was given complete freedom to organise defeatist meetings and to set up revolutionary propaganda machinery in most of the big French war factories. And it was no vague, mealy-mouthed pacifist idealism that he preached, but the frank Red practice of mutiny, barricades, and revolution. It was suggested that he enjoyed immunity from arrest because he acted as a police informer. Monsieur Malvy's evident desire to deny this suggestion showed that, even in a country where the *agent provocateur* is, perhaps, a more usual police tool than he is in Anglo-Saxon countries, Mauricius had considerably over-acted his part.

He and Faure founded a number of defeatist and treasonable newspapers and organisations. When their activity first alarmed the Government, Malvy

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was instructed by the Cabinet to reason with Faure, and to persuade him of the error of his ways. He succeeded so well that Faure obtained a monthly subsidy from the Secret Service funds of the Ministry, which he devoted to carrying on the old campaign. Malvy's benevolence towards him was such that when he was arrested by the police, on a charge of obscene behaviour in one of the parks of Paris, a mysterious protector had the proceedings quashed. A year later, charged with a repetition of this offence, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Clemenceau was then in power.

Trotsky enjoyed the same most-favoured-nation treatment, and it was in France that he began the great enterprise of general demolition that finally led him back to Siberia. It was only after the Russian troops at Marseilles had risen and murdered their colonel that any action was taken against him; and even then it was half-hearted and procrastinating. In the case of Trotsky, and of countless other suspects, an almost incredible situation existed. The very Department of State whose duty it was to encourage patriotic spirit was subsidising and protecting men who aimed solely at undermining national moral in the interests of Germany, or of world-wide revolution. The machinery of the higher police was busy, not

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so much in tracking down traitors as in protecting them against the zeal of officials and soldiers, for there were many simple souls who had not seen how far Monsieur Malvy was prepared to pursue his policy of non-intervention in any matter connected, however vaguely or mistakenly, with Labour circles, or in which figured any of Almeyreda's protégés of the 'B' list.

These men naturally became aware that they enjoyed a large measure of tolerant immunity. Their printing plants were known to the police; they thoroughly realised that the reports of Communist or stop-the-war meetings in war factories were regularly sent to the Ministry of the Interior; they knew also that, so long as they did not mobilise the mass of public opinion against them by public revolutionary antics, Monsieur Malvy would leave them more or less in peace. However visible their methods and their fruits might be to the Administration, so long as they carried on their work underground, as it were, they were safe. Their campaign, therefore, had to be more or less of a personal character. For success they had to count mainly upon a snowball organisation; upon creating centres of despondency which would spread contagion around them. Their share of responsibility in the strikes and mutinies of 1917 was great; but it was as nothing

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compared with that of the men who used the slogan-power of daily newspapers for the same purpose. They were the heavy artillery of defeatism.

Chief among this class of journals was the *Bonnet Rouge*. Before the war this paper was subsidised by Caillaux in return for services rendered by Almeyreda and his gang of Corsican cut-throats during Madame Caillaux's trial for the murder of Gaston Calmette. Those subsidies stopped when the trial ended in Madame Caillaux's astounding acquittal.

Almeyreda had 'other clients' who were willing, in return for silence, or for political pull in the right quarter, to provide the friend of Caillaux and of Malvy with the means of running his paper and of living on a large scale. Malvy himself, as Minister of the Interior, contributed to the *Bonnet Rouge* budget, and in return Almeyreda professed to be keeping the unruly elements of labour quiet. His requests and recommendations were acceded to and followed by the police as though they came from the Minister himself.

In Britain as in America members of the legislature are made aware of the pressure of constituents, and Ministers of the shamelessness of members, in requesting favours. But in few countries has the system become as general as it is in France, particularly where a Socialist Radical

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Minister is concerned. In London, as in Washington, a Minister frequently finds it necessary to employ one or two secretaries to protect him against the importunate beggars who are the chief political product of democracy, but in France many more are required to placate them. If a man wants some post even of minor employment under the State, he worries his deputy, who every day has scores of such letters to deal with. If the supplicant be a person of any importance at all a letter is sent to the Minister concerned, urging his right to the appointment. If he be of real weight a visit to the Ministry is necessary, or at least a telephone call to the 'Cabinet' which in French ministerial life is a mixture of the permanently official and purely personal secretariat, and is an extremely important cogwheel in the machinery of government. Requests of any sort coming from a supporter are naturally entitled to consideration, and to anyone at all familiar with the lax methods of some Governments, it was perfectly easy to understand how at the Ministry of the Interior the intervention of a deputy enabled suspect after suspect to avoid an internment camp or expulsion from the country. It is so easy to say '*Mais oui, mon ami, c'est entendu,*' and to give that left handshake so peculiarly popular among Parliamentarians.

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The court-martial judges, accustomed to army discipline and by their training unable to comprehend any system not outlined in regulations, found difficulty in grasping this flexible political behaviour. They were quite obviously ignorant of the manners and customs of the *République des Camarades* and were deeply shocked, much as a small man of business would be staggered if he saw a very big deal go through on an exchange of nods. But even the High Court of the Senate, composed of judges all thoroughly acquainted with the easy-going methods of political life, was disturbed by the part played by the Ministry of the Interior at a critical moment in the affairs of the *Bonnet Rouge*.

Germany, through Duval, had become the owner of that treasonable organ. Duval, who, through the Minister's 'Cabinet,' had obtained his passports for Switzerland, was searched at Bellegarde on the frontier. A cheque from Marx of Mannheim, Germany's spy paymaster, for 150,000 francs was found upon him. He was allowed to proceed, but the cheque was forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior, where it was actually handed back to Duval by M. Leymarie, head of Malvy's 'Cabinet' and of the *Sûreté Générale*. For this action M. Leymarie was tried and condemned by the Third Court Martial, and the

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matter was only brought before the Senate as being part of the general atmosphere of the Place Beauveau during Malvy's tenancy of that office.

More serious from Malvy's point of view was his intervention on behalf of his friend Caillaux in the Lipscher *affaire*, which is treated more fully in the chapter on the Caillaux case.

In reviewing the whole case, the Procurator-General of the Republic, with commendable restraint, drew largely upon the report made by an eminent Senator, Henry Bérenger, to the Army Committee. Considering the mutinies and the general spread of defeatism throughout France, M. Bérenger asked :

'Could this contamination be avoided? Was it not the inevitable result of three years' war? Could any Government have been able to prevent these incidents, to put a stop to this propaganda and the scandals which it has brought in its train?'

His answer, which is a verdict, not only upon Malvy but upon the whole slack history of the *République des Camarades*, is that if France had had real war power and real war leading at the Ministry of the Interior, things would not have gone as they did. The political machine was too weak, too open to influence, too lax in the presence of immorality and too accommodating towards Internationalists. 'In determining responsibility,'

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the report proceeded, 'there is one fact which stands out. It is that the first acts of treason discovered in the middle of 1917 are the result of mistakes or crimes committed in 1915 and 1916. It took the responsible public authorities two years to get moving in the matter, and then they did so only when goaded by Parliament, which was at long last alarmed by the double spectacle of mutinies in the army and the effects of pacifist propaganda. . . . Not one of the successive war Governments of France has understood that a long-drawn-out war requires a corresponding strengthening of State police forces.'

Nothing was done from August 1914 until October 1917, during three of history's most terrible years, to make of the Ministry of the Interior a real Ministry of National Safety. On the contrary, the Ministry in those formidable matters of police, prostitution, gambling, pacifism and anti-patriotism was a Ministry of detachment, and abstained from carrying out its duty of control. Even worse, when the military bureau and certain sections of the police, or of liaison between the police and General Headquarters, displayed vigour in dealing with suspects, it was always against the former and in favour of the latter that the Ministry intervened. Thus it was on the initiation of the Ministry that the Second Bureau was suppressed,

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because its officers had interfered with the *Bonnet Rouge* gang, and had acted with a firmness which did not suit M. Malvy's policy. Again, it was M. Malvy who forbade the *Sûreté Générale* to continue its general reports on the anti-patriotic campaign in the country. He it was who deprived army commanders of the *Sûreté's* reports on the anarchist campaign and left the whole machinery of police investigation and control in its peacetime inadequacy.

'Had,' commented the Senator - 'had the Minister, instead of reserving his favour for gaol-birds like Almeyreda, and for Anarchists such as Mauricius, spent his days and his nights controlling behind the lines the workings of his department in a manner worthy of the sacrifices of the Front, France would certainly have had neither military disorders nor political scandals. What can be thought of a Home Office which officially subsidised Sebastian Faure, where Garfunkel, who ran a desertion agency, did as he pleased, where Leymarie in the Minister's own 'cabinet' handed back suspect cheques to their suspect owners, of which highly placed police officials did not think it beneath them to frequent a house of debauch, while people were dying for their imperilled Motherland. . . . The Minister of the Interior is the chief culprit.'

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M. Malvy's defence was twofold. He justified the general policy of non-interference in anarchist and defeatist circles connected, however distantly, with labour, upon results, and claimed, with some right, that in any case his general policy had been approved by the successive Cabinets in which he had served as Minister of the Interior. While not seeking to prove that his private life had been all that might have been expected from an austere Republican cast in the ancient mould, he successfully cleared himself of the worst mud flung at him by public rumour. His wife, in a fine letter of restrained emotion, went far to obliterate any prejudice which one of the tragedies in his private life might have created.

After expressing her pained surprise at the mention of intimate family affairs, she wrote that if she had, to use the court's phrase, amnestied her husband, it was because her sense of honour showed that he was worthy of it.

'I have known all and forgiven all, and I approve in every way of my husband's conduct, which was that of an honest man when his duty and the responsibilities he had incurred forced him to take the necessary action.'

The court, by a caprice peculiar to the exercise of judicial functions by an elected body, finally acquitted M. Malvy of the charges made against

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him, but found him guilty on one count which, although ever present to the mind of the court, was in legal reality never before it. The charges of direct treason levelled at him by Léon Daudet were dismissed. It was held to be proven that Malvy was in no way implicated in the divul-gation of documents relating to the Salonika expedition. But the court found that at the end of 1914 a plot was formed to destroy the defence of France by sapping the nation's moral and the discipline of the army by the creation of newspapers, the dissemination of pamphlets, by speeches and by lectures; that M. Malvy knew of the existence of this criminal undertaking, which was the chief cause of the military mutinies in May and June 1917; and that, instead of fighting it with the utmost energy, M. Malvy subsidised one of the papers, most of whose editorial staff was found guilty of treason. He was, moreover, held responsible by the judgment of the court of having favoured the criminal activities of Almeyreda, Sebastian Faure and Duval of the *Bonnet Rouge*. He was declared to have hindered the police in following the activity of the spy Lipscher, whose mistress called upon Caillaux, and to have refused to put a stop to the anti-patriotic propaganda of the anarchist Mauricius and to root out the clandestine presses from which came the main

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stream of treasonably pacifist propaganda. He was found guilty of having waived aside the criminal law for the benefit of Sebastian Faure and of having destroyed official documents dealing with the charges brought against him.

Malvy's defence was curtly dismissed in the judgment delivered by the court, which declined to admit the plea that his policy was dictated by a desire to avoid trouble with labour, and the court briefly expressed its indignation at the idea of there being any community of thought or action between the overwhelmingly patriotic bulk of the working classes and the collection of gaolbirds and scallawags to whom M. Malvy thought it prudent to defer. The court found that M. Malvy as Minister of the Interior had failed in, violated and betrayed the duties of his office and was guilty of forfeiture. Upon which count he was condemned to five years' banishment, but since has become again an important member of the Chamber of Deputies and President of its Finance Committee.

In many ways M. Malvy may be held to be blameless. No one in his senses could find in the evidence produced before the Senate, sitting as the High Court of Justice, an atom of proof, or even of reasonable suggestion that he had wittingly betrayed his country. He was nothing but the poor sport

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of circumstance and environment, and had at least an opportunity of greatness thrust upon him by the war which neither his upbringing, his mode of life, nor his traditions fitted him to support.

I remember Malvy returning to his Ministry at three o'clock in the morning from a prolonged Cabinet meeting at the Elysée, where the gauntlet flung by Germany had been picked up. War had been declared. In the smoke-heavy atmosphere of his study he received a score of journalists. Lacklustre eyes stared from lean, sunken features as though contemplating horror. Men required courage or conviction, in that soul-searching preface to August 1914, either to resign or to shoulder responsibility. Malvy, apart from natural emotion, had neither to fall back upon; he was a highly-finished specimen of a political *arriviste*, with all the defects and qualities of passion and egotism belonging to that type of man. He was, moreover, a special child of the *République des Camarades* for whom laws were but a bogey with which to threaten enemies. In that special kind of Republic the *lettre de recommandation* from a deputy had just as much effect as a *lettre de cachet* from Louis XIV. Law was made as a weapon of government to be turned at once from its course when it threatened a friend of the Government. The Police (who require a capital letter in France)

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no doubt had to justify their existence by maintaining the particular degree of order or disorder that suited the Minister of the Interior's policy; they also had to arrest burglars and from time to time inflame public passion by producing a Landru-Bluebeard, but their chief occupation was to look after the interests of their Minister and to see that neither he nor any of his personal or political friends got into serious trouble.

M. Malvy failed to realise, as did a great many other folk, that while war may be a blind, savage, senseless, ravaging beast, it gives a new value to life and to death. It is inexorable. You fight or you do not. He failed to grasp the brutal fact that war is not fought with four-ounce gloves, and that when a country is fighting for its very existence all peace-time habits of political compromise, juggling and nepotism must go by the board. For how could it serve a Ministry to win a victory in the Chamber if defeat knocked at the gates of the capital?

Malvy was, in a way, the scapegoat of a whole system, of a régime, of nearly fifty years of Republican Government in France with its luxuriant undergrowth of corruption. The Third Republic has emerged stronger from the furnace of war, which carried off the Second Empire in a mere whiff of smoke. Any Republic which,

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founded in defeat, acquires strength fifty years afterwards in spite of political leaders such as M. Malvy, has solid hope of durability. More than the laxness of Malvy is needed to counteract the staying power of M. Dupont behind his grocery counter, and the solid Frenchness of the people who make France.

CHAPTER SEVEN

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(1) CALMETTE'S MURDER

THERE are few things in French political life so difficult to understand as the powers exerted in and out of office by M. Joseph Caillaux. His public and his private life have been full of adventures; have reacted one upon the other to such an extent, and with such world-wide effect, that it is no exaggeration to say that he is one of the most interesting, as he is one of the least-known, public men of our time. Anyone who desires to have a proper appreciation of the conflicting policies which brought forth war must devote close study to his activities, and, in order to understand them in their devious hesitations, equal consideration must be given to his private affairs. Especially is it impossible to treat of Caillaux's war record and his trial on the charge of treason without examining his advocacy of the Income Tax, which unchained against him the

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furies of that particularly hide-bound Toryism known in France as the *grande bourgeoisie*; and without some knowledge of his Moroccan negotiations, in which he seems to have been ready to abandon the somewhat vague security offered by the *entente cordiale* with Great Britain in favour of a more concrete understanding with Germany.

Ambiguity enters into foreign relations even more than it does into domestic matters. More than one treaty has been drafted in the past, and doubtless will be in the future, in such deliberately hazy terms as enable both parties to sign, leaving the application of them to future generations. Even after all war's political teaching there are yet folk simple enough to imagine that, because some more or less forgotten statesmen signed a treaty which for a number of years at least it would be to the interest of the signatory countries to observe, when such conditions are utterly different the agreement is still going to be carried out, even though it may mean national suicide. Germany's *Not kennt kein Gebot* is, unhappily, not such a devil's maxim as propaganda tried to make us believe. Hard sense says that a treaty involving the outrageous gamble of war can only be counted upon when the nation whom it pledges still finds its interest, as well as its honour, in observing its provisions.

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Great Britain, throughout the *entente cordiale* negotiations resolutely declined to make any formal agreement to support France in the event of her being attacked. No one can very well be expected to accuse Viscount Grey of Falloden of being a dishonest man, and when, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he repeatedly denied the existence of any such convention he was telling the truth. In spite of tremendous French pressure British diplomacy endeavoured to retain its position at the centre of the European see-saw, and its freedom to serve national interests by throwing its weight on one side or the other or by remaining aloof.

British people who shared the terrible anxiety of France, while Britain appeared in July and August 1914 to shrink from the logical responsibilities of Edwardian foreign policy, and who know how frail and uncertain was the military basis of the *entente cordiale*, can perhaps the better understand M. Caillaux's pre-war policy in favour of a Franco-German understanding and realise that such an arrangement, however deplorable to purely British interests, might nevertheless have been not only defensible, but even desirable to far-seeing French statesmanship.

History shows that it is perfectly possible for a man to detest everything connected with Great

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Britain and yet remain a thoroughly praiseworthy French patriot. We find a natural difficulty in appreciating properly a man's policies and actions when they run counter to what we imagine to be our own interests. Caillaux's anti-British reputation makes the task of describing his career one to be done with scrupulous delicacy.

The policy which led him to the Agadir negotiations with Germany behind the back, not only of France's British friends, but even without the knowledge of M. de Selves, Foreign Minister in his own Cabinet, was certainly open to attack from Britain, but it was defensible from a French standpoint. Caillaux claims, perhaps with justice, that by the cession of singularly unprofitable stretches of the French Congo he postponed European war. He also doubtless thinks that if the opportunity of that time had been utilised to come to a general arrangement with Germany war would not have broken out in 1914. Such thoughts might well have been entertained by the most patriotic Frenchman, and Caillaux can, indeed, point out that of all the voices counselling France to come to friendly terms with Germany since the war, those of British Foreign Secretaries, Liberal, Labour and Tory, have been the most insistent.

He would also be entitled to remark that, while

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the whole problem of sea power in Europe has been changed by the destruction of the German Fleet, the old menace on French eastern frontiers has been diminished for but a little while.

This is not an attempt to judge Caillaux's policy, but a brief survey of his pre-war coquetry with Germany has to be made if the suspicion which naturally enveloped his every action when war broke out is to be understood. Was he not Germany's man? He was even more than that! He was the sponsor of Income Tax in France, a Radical, and the personal enemy of those whom the *Spectator* would call 'all right-thinking people of the country.' Chauvinist feeling and fiscal selfishness breed much hate in politics in every country, and when war was declared Caillaux was loathed heartily by millions of French people. Electoral jerrymandering and centralised administrative control make it possible for a man to be looked upon as a devil by half the French community, without, as usually happens in England, the other half of the people worshipping him as a saint, and the same forces make it possible for a politician to run France without the backing of enthusiastic crowds of electors.

Caillaux, the son of a former Finance Minister and millionaire, came into the world with a spoon in his mouth which was at least silver-gilt. He

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started as a Reactionary, and, like a wise Republican politician, became an opportunist and a Minister under Waldeck-Rousseau. His campaign in favour of fiscal readjustment by means of an Income Tax won him the secret approval of those people whose sense of cupidity and envy finds satisfaction in feeling that rich people are going to be made poor. Clericalism being dead as a Radical battle-cry, Income Tax made an excellent successor. His technical financial knowledge was profound, and he fully realised the injustice of the old system of taxation. But the sincerity of his advocacy of Income Tax may well be called into question by a letter written by him to his second wife, in which he boasted that in the Senate he had 'squashed the Income Tax while seeming to support it.'

Before that letter was published M. Briand would seem to have known of its existence when he painted a picture of Caillaux as a 'demagogic plutocrat' who gesticulated in such a frenzied manner, and waved his fists about in such a threatening way over wealth, that nobody could say whether he wanted to attack it or defend it.

The bitterness aroused by his German policy, and perhaps even more by his Income Tax proposals, led to domestic tragedy and to the trial

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of his second wife for the murder of Gaston Calmette, editor of the *Figaro*. In the spring of 1914, Madame Caillaux called at the *Figaro* office and emptied the contents of a Browning into the editor. War was then brewing. Joseph Caillaux was Minister of Finance and the real head of the Government, and the killing of Calmette, which naturally led to Caillaux's withdrawal from the Government, probably changed the course of European history almost as much as the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo.

Madame Caillaux was tried at the Seine Assizes in the closing days of peace in July 1914, and that trial, with the furious political passions it unchained, no doubt further persuaded Germany that the iron was hot and that she must strike. Caillaux left nothing neglected to ensure his wife's acquittal and to defend his own career, both public and private. At a moment when all eyes should have been turned to the frontier practically all French political attention was concentrated upon Madame Caillaux's trial. The majority in the Chamber of Deputies owed its seats to her husband's influence. The Minister of the Interior, M. Malvy, and the Minister of Justice, M. Bienvenu-Martin, the two chief factors in such a trial, were Caillaux's direct representatives in

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the Cabinet. M. Viviani, the Prime Minister, recognised his leadership of the Socialist-Radical Party.

Although Madame Caillaux's determination to put such a drastic end to Gaston Calmette's attacks on Caillaux was due to fear of personal revelations, affecting her reputation in society as well as her husband's political career, the political aspect of the deed overshadowed everything. All the advanced parties rallied to Caillaux's banner. Calmette was buried in the middle of a riot in which police, Socialists, Royalists and ordinary Conservatives bore their cheerful part. As is nearly always the case when the public allows itself to be dragged down into the feral arena of political gladiators, it quickly lost all sense of proportion. Joseph Caillaux became to one faction a hero of democracy, the defender of the suffering poor against the greedy owners of wealth, and Madame Caillaux was pictured as his avenging angel. Gaston Calmette, who used as a means of attacking the politicians private correspondence between Joseph and Hélène before they shared the name of Caillaux, was held up by his friends as a model of good breeding. He was likened to Bayard, but although he undoubtedly was without fear his campaign was not above reproach. The briefing of Maître Labori for the defence gave to

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the *affaire* its apt historic importance as a pendant to the Dreyfus case.

The trial gave an astounding picture of French political society and is in all its details worthy of study. For the purposes of this book it is deeply significant, as explaining the suspicious fury which assailed every action taken by Caillaux during the war, and as weaving those threads with Germany and creating that atmosphere which were later to lead to Caillaux's appearance before the High Court of French Justice. The courtyard of the Palais de Justice in the days of Madame Caillaux's trial throbbed with many more footsteps than ever sounded with echoing surge around Dr. Manette's London home.

Madame Caillaux's trial began on 20th July 1914 and ended in her acquittal in the early hours of 29th July, when Paris was full of conflicting shouts of 'Vive Caillaux' and 'A Berlin.' That she shot Calmette is beyond dispute. I myself was in the dying man's room at the *Figaro* office when the two most scared policemen I have ever seen came to arrest her. She was standing cold and defiant against a wall opposite the sofa where lay her victim. She pleaded that her action was unpremeditated. Yet she went to a gun-shop to buy a revolver that very day and practised with it against a target representing a man in the gun-

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smith's galleries. She also pleaded that she shot Calmette because she feared that he was about to publish letters of an intimate character written to her by Joseph Caillaux before his divorce from Madame Gueydan-Caillaux, his first wife.

This motive may well have existed. The *Figaro* campaign against her husband was extraordinarily bitter, and Calmette was clearly in possession of deadly ammunition. In the three months the campaign lasted the *Figaro* published one hundred and thirty-eight articles and caricatures in which Caillaux was held up to execration, either as a 'crook' who used his position as Minister of Finance to favour vast personal speculations on the Bourse, or as a Minister who found it advantageous to his pocket to support the designs of Germany. It was argued by Calmette's friends that the campaign was kept strictly within political limits, and that when Madame Caillaux decided to kill him it was not because of any personal fears, but because she and her husband were stricken with panic at the possibility of further political, not personal, revelations with regard to Caillaux's secret negotiations with Germany and the so-called 'Green Documents.' That also is possible.

M. de Selves was Foreign Minister in Caillaux's Cabinet at the time those secret and direct negotiations were in progress between Caillaux

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and Germany. His first knowledge of them was obtained by the deciphering department of his own Ministry, which, unknown to the German Embassy, had succeeded in finding the key to the German code, and had intercepted a telegram from the German Ambassador advising his Government to deal direct with Caillaux, since he would probably be found more amenable than the Foreign Office. M. de Selves, after consultation with his friend Clemenceau, placed the matter before the President of the Republic and resigned. Caillaux, certainly without thought of the consequences of such action, requested the German Embassy to be more discreet in its code telegrams. Thus, for the first time, Germany discovered that none of her Embassy secrets was hidden from the French. A new code was introduced, the solution of which baffled all efforts of the French experts for many years.

The circumstances surrounding both the domestic and the political documents in the case were truly remarkable. The former had been purloined by a jealous wife and used as a weapon to break the ties between Caillaux and the lady whom he subsequently married. As the result of the compromise which had to be effected Caillaux had to agree to abandon any idea of seeking a divorce and to break off relations with the lady.

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In return the letters were solemnly burnt in the presence of witnesses. A few months afterwards Caillaux began divorce proceedings, and when he married again it became very quickly clear that Madame Gueyden-Caillaux, while consenting to the burning of the letters, had taken the precaution of having them photographed, and it was the publication of those facsimiles by the *Figaro* that led to the killing of Calmette.

With the curious procedure of French law the interest of the court was at one moment centred upon entirely human passions, with Madame Gueyden-Caillaux, vengeful and triumphant, in the witness-box, Madame Hélène Caillaux, the second wife, tearful in the dock, and Joseph Caillaux, former Prime Minister, red and impassioned, taking a vigorous part in the dispute about their triangular relations. An hour or so later the jury would be listening to a purely political duel between ex-Premiers, or to the evidence of the President of the Republic, or a heated quarrel between Bernstein the playwright and Joseph Caillaux as to which was the greater patriot. Great surgeons, such as Doyen and Pozzi, showed how the operation on Calmette should or should not have been done. Maître Labori and Maître Chenu fenced courteously over procedure. Office-boys explained what they imagined was in Madame

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Caillaux's mind after her act. Gunsmiths showed how deadly is the Browning, and Madame Caillaux from the dock, with persuasive spontaneity, assured the jury that they had no idea how easily a Browning could be fired. 'It goes off by itself.' Caillaux lectured the jury upon fiscal reform, and upon the course of his policy in dealing with Germany. In fact the court talked about most things except the question as to whether Madame Hélène Caillaux had wilfully murdered Gaston Calmette. Indeed, on some days, her presence in the dock was almost forgotten. Two of the judges challenged each other to a duel, and every day the heat and fever inside the court rose as the war clouds gathered thicker and thicker on Eastern Europe.

When all was over the Presiding Judge left one question only to the jury. Did Madame Caillaux murder Calmette with premeditation? The minimum penalty in the case of an affirmative answer was five years' imprisonment; the maximum death.

The jury shrank from inflicting such a punishment and stoutly declared that Calmette, whose body contained four bullets fired at him point-blank by Madame Caillaux, without a word of previous discussion, had not been murdered at all.

The effect of this acquittal upon the public was so much dreaded by the authorities that the

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verdict was by arrangement only given at two in the morning. Excited crowds had thronged the boulevards all the evening, and it was thought wise to let them get home to bed before the trial closed. It is significant of the intense interest taken in it, that wonder was felt in those days of uncertainty, as to whether the Government was not deliberately blackening the European situation in the hope of diverting public attention from proceedings at the Palais de Justice.

Within a week the great storm broke.

(2) THE STORM

Caillaux and his troubles were forgotten in the first clash of arms. He, however, remembers them, with what arrogant bitterness will probably never be known. His wife's action had revealed to all the world the painful stories of his two marriages. He, Joseph Caillaux, the all-powerful Minister, had been shown like any ordinary fool blubbering forth at his first wife's knee protestations of almost schoolboy affection, promises to be good in future, and pleas for forgiveness and reconciliation. He, the arrogant man of honour, had been dragged through the mire in the effort to show that, as in his personal dealings with marriage and divorce he had been faithless, so in his political actions he had

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been corrupt and unscrupulous. Politicians, men who had been his Ministerial colleagues, had treated him without mercy in their evidence. The wounds were deep and they rankled, and behind the great stage of war the fight against Caillaux continued. His inclusion in a War Cabinet, even one of War Coalition, was obviously impossible, and Caillaux had to content himself at the greatest period of his country's history with exerting his influence unseen through his representatives in the Government, the chief of whom was M. Malvy, Minister of the Interior. Such an effaced rôle could not satisfy a man of his ambitious pride. Even had he desired to be forgotten in the turmoil his opponents would have given him no rest. After one or two painful scenes, when M. and Madame Caillaux were recognised at restaurants and driven from their tables, and sometimes were subjected to even rougher treatment, the Government, in order to free itself of his embarrassing presence in the capital, gave him an appointment in the Army Pay Department. He showed neither respect nor fondness for military discipline, and he was sent further afield to South America, on a mission specially created for him. The charges subsequently made against him were partly based on his activity and attitude while on these visits abroad. They were also supported by

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the atmosphere in which he moved, and by the pressure of logic.

No accusation is more commonly made against politicians than that of inconsistency. But when the fickleness of democracies is borne in mind I confess that I have come across an astounding amount of political consistency, if by that be understood the way in which politicians in the main have to wear the labels affixed upon them by the public.

Thus Briand has remained true to his early reputation as a peaceful accommodator, and still seeks to introduce into world politics that state of *apaisement* which he has failed to get accepted in domestic matters. Beaten at Cannes and driven from office, he has tried again at Geneva and Locarno. He hoped to be the European peacemaker after victory. Caillaux expected to be the French peacemaker after defeat. Neither foresaw Clemenceau. Caillaux, by his past political record, was obviously a man with whom, from both a German and a French standpoint, something might be done; and as the war dragged on there was an uneasy feeling that something was being done.

Rumours of Caillaux's conversations in South America, of his activity in France, began to circulate. His political foes noticed the reappearance of men who had served Caillaux in the past

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during his pre-war negotiations with Germany. A regular campaign of defeatism was begun by men with whom Caillaux was in contact. Gradually the chain which linked him to his past became stronger and longer. P. Lenoir, who first sought to buy the *Journal* for Germany, was the son of a man used as an agent by Caillaux in his Moroccan negotiations with Germany. Bolo, who later on did buy the *Journal*, was among Caillaux's friends. The *Bonnet Rouge* was edited by Almeyreda, who committed suicide in gaol while awaiting his trial for treason, and Almeyreda was the man who had organised Caillaux's Corsican bodyguard during the trial of Madame Caillaux in July 1914. Caillaux had subsidised the paper then, and his friend and representative in the Cabinet during the war, M. Malvy, had done so subsequently.

As the treason trials developed it required all the courage of friendship to remain a friend of Joseph Caillaux. Acquaintance with him seemed to sow death and dishonour, and it became abundantly clear, as traitor after traitor left the Third Court-Martial to face a firing-party or years of imprisonment, that all these cases were in reality aimed, not only at the miserable wretches who died, but at Caillaux, who has lived to be Minister once more, and at Malvy, who has again taken a prominent place in politics.

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As it has been pointed out, parliamentarians are always chary, and the French are particularly so after the lessons of the Revolution, in executing their political opponents, since, in public affairs, there are always too many chances of reprisal for such operations to be considered prudent. But once a beginning had been made in stamping out defeatism and treason it became rapidly clear that the Government, and particularly Clemenceau's Government, would have to go to the end of its policy and risk results. Public opinion, thoroughly alarmed by the *Bonnet Rouge* and other trials, was persuaded that someone was seeking to exploit France's war weariness for his own political purposes, and public opinion inevitably fastened upon Caillaux as the man. Clemenceau would have lost all his victorious authority over the minds of his fellow citizens and their allies had he hesitated to arrest Caillaux. The old Tiger began as a journalist his campaign against the forces which believed in the failure of the Allies. He continued it as a Senator, and ended it as Père la Victoire. He regarded the evil as an artichoke, the leaves of which have to be stripped off one by one until the heart is reached with its bristling armour of fibre. Caillaux and Malvy formed that heart, and the solidity of a Parliament which they themselves had shaped out of the electorate was

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their fibrous defence. The *Bonnet Rouge*, Bolo and Humbert trials were the leaves, and in each of them was to be discerned a foretaste of the heart they covered – the *affaires* Malvy and Caillaux.

Such was the passion engendered by these two cases that it was perhaps fortunate for both the accused, in spite of their prominence in the country, that when they finally stood their trial France was enjoying the first pleasant illusions of victory.

Clemenceau, although a ruthless party man, was a patriot, and sufficiently Parliamentary to realise that whatever evidence he might be able to produce it would be better to stop short of shooting a man of Caillaux's importance. Therefore he lent himself with a certain amount of graciousness to long-drawn-out delays. Ordinary French legal procedure is almost incomprehensible to Anglo-Saxon minds. In war-time it becomes utterly bewildering. Clemenceau used to boast that he was the only French politician who had been really assassinated since 1914, and, in fact, while Madame Caillaux was acquitted of the murder of Calmette, whom she undoubtedly shot, while Raoul Villain was acquitted of the murder of Jean Jaurès, Cottin, who only wounded Clemenceau, was actually condemned to death for murder. Moreover, although a not very recent civil dis-

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turbance in France destroyed the Bastille, and abolished the system of *lettres de cachet*, Raoul Villain lay for years in the 'dungeons' of the Republic without making even a police court appearance. The mills of ordinary civil and military justice may be slow and complicated in their grinding, but when a Parliamentarian is accused things become ten times worse, and while, in the former, political considerations may play a more or less furtive part, in the latter the whole political orchestra blares at full strength.

First of all, parliamentary permission has to be obtained before a Deputy or a Senator can be prosecuted, and the opening skirmish in the battle begins on that point. The charge, after hours of heated debate, is referred to a Committee of the House, which then proceeds to have a little trial of its own, examining documents and witnesses, with a view to deciding whether there be enough evidence to support the Government in its request that the accused member's parliamentary immunity shall be suspended, and also with a view to determining the nature of the offence for which the accused shall be tried, and consequently the tribunal before which he shall appear. In this case the choice lay between a grim court-martial or an anodyne Senate sitting as the High Court of France.

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Before the Chamber Committee, Clemenceau spoke with brutal frankness. He was surrounded by Deputies scared out of their lives at the prospect of having to send one of their most prominent colleagues to meet the summary, straightforward and straight-thinking justice of a court-martial.

'Think,' he was told by one timid member. 'Think of the precedent you are creating before you throw these men to the public wolves. You'll be forced to continue. You'll have to give them Briand. There are even newspapers who say that you will follow.' Clemenceau: 'Here I am. That doesn't frighten me.' Clemenceau admitted that his case against Caillaux was based upon presumption, but sufficient presumption to make it necessary for justice to examine it. Again a member objected. 'But supposing that your case collapses, what will happen to us and yourself?' Clemenceau: 'Oh, that doesn't matter, not the slightest. All that matters is that men who are going to their death at the Front shall trust the Government behind them. The poilu says, "They don't make all this fuss before executing us. While we are getting killed the civvies are messing about with questions of procedure." You can't have people saying that we want to protect politicians.'

Caillaux was arrested on 14th January 1918,

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but his trial did not begin until January 1920. Clemenceau, *bon enfant* although *vieux tigre*, had accepted without much demur that Caillaux should be treated as a political offender, and, indeed, it would have been difficult, especially after the tension of war had relaxed, to have pressed for a court-martial. His 'treason,' if treason there was, could not by any manner of means be ascribed to any venal motive. He was only in the painful position of every politician when he backs the wrong horse, but he was, nevertheless, fortunate in that his trial was held in the more or less clement days of peace, when folk were more anxious to heal the scars of war than to keep them as open wounds. Instead of being judged by a few uncompromising soldiers, whose knowledge of political affairs and the devious workings of government is usually nil, who think in their straightforward manner that anyone must be guilty of treason who seeks in war-time to overthrow the existing Government of his country, Caillaux appeared before the purely political tribunal of the Senate sitting as the High Court.

In the early days of the case before the Parliamentary Committee, Clemenceau fought hard for freedom of choice of jurisdiction. He wanted to be able to send Caillaux for trial to a

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court-martial or to the Senate as might be indicated by the accumulating evidence. If the charge against Caillaux had been that of intelligence with the enemy (in other words, treason) the court-martial would have had to deal with it. If he were accused of political crime, such as conspiring against the *régime* or of seeking to destroy the alliances of France, then he became the judicial prey of the Senate. The latter decision prevailed, and Caillaux came before the Upper House, which had already exiled his political associate and personal friend, Malvy.

Every country endeavours to make its State trials impressive. The Senate is usually a dull assembly, and any efforts that may have been made either to cheer it up, or to invest its proceedings during the Caillaux case with extra dignity, were not apparent. The general result of the case the Senators were called upon to try was already clear to close observers of politics. Three days before the opening of the trial Senatorial elections had been held and a new President, known to be favourable to Caillaux, M. Léon Bourgeois, had been voted into the chair, which was also the judge's seat, by a hundred and forty-seven votes, while only seventeen were obtained by Caillaux's former Minister and enemy, M. de Selves. The political complexion of the Upper Chamber was

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so completely 'Caillautist,' that it would be ridiculous to describe the proceedings in the phraseology of a court of law. The Senate met, but the court did not sit. The packed galleries listened, not to 'proceedings' but to 'debates,' and even the scarlet robes of counsel for the prosecution in no way counteracted the impression that the trial was not that of a man and of a crime but that of a party and a policy.

The consistency of fate forced Caillaux to believe that a long struggle with Germany could only lead to French defeat. He must have had an almost overwhelming desire to make an advantageous French peace after the first battle of the Marne – a peace perhaps at British expense, but who can to-day say that it would not have been to French profit, and who on that would to-day care to base a charge of treason?

Norman Angell had the great illusion that no one could go to war because it cost too much. What escaped his attention was that peoples are so completely crazy that they will fight, whatever it costs, provided that they have an idea that their national existence is at stake. Caillaux was long-headed enough to realise that after the first battle of the Marne France had a chance of cutting her losses. Who can say to-day that he was not right? *But* he was also short-sighted enough not to see

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that in the long run a Coalition, similar to that which brought Napoleon down, was bound to triumph over Germany. Maddened by the folly of successive War Governments in Allied countries he prepared for peace! He was already marked out by his past and by the faith that Germany had in him as a good European to be the negotiator of Franco-German peace. And, unfortunately for him, he played about with that idea. He did even more. He committed some of his playful fancies to paper and made notes of what he would do if by a convulsive effort he managed to seize power and become Dictator of France. Those notes were found in a safe at Florence and they lost his cause.

The investigation of the charges brought against him covered a long period and a wide field of action. The circumstances attending Caillaux's pre-war relations with Germany were closely examined with a view to ascertaining how far Caillaux in his foreign policy was committed to Franco-German *rapprochement*. This part of the proceedings created the background for charges based upon his war-time opinions and actions, and relationships in South America, Italy and France with people whose fervour for the Allied cause was not at white heat, or who, as the treason trials had shown, were actually traitors subsidised by Germany. He was, to say the least

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of it, not lucky in his acquaintances, of whom a considerable number was executed or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

(3) THE PROSECUTION

Such being the general atmosphere surrounding Caillaux, what was the broad basis of the charges made against him? He was accused of having failed to live up to the spirit of Foch's most famous saying: 'Victory always is on the side of those who deserve it by their superior will-power and greater intelligence; a victory is a battle in which one won't admit defeat,' and of having failed in his duty to respect and strengthen both the military and civilian moral of his countrymen.

He was accused of having ignored the elementary political rule that in war-time it is the right of no man, however high his place may have been in the counsels of a nation, to put into practice a policy of war or of peace contrary to that of the existing Government. The third principle which Caillaux was charged with having violated was that which forbids in war-time any form of economic, political, or merely moral support being given to enemy undertakings.

'It is because he was blinded by pride,' said the Prosecutor-General, Lescouvé, at the trial, 'by

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disappointed ambition, by spite aroused through his exclusion from the official Government of his country, by hatred of his adversaries; and because he desired to indulge the dangerous tendencies of his pre-war policy, that M. Joseph Caillaux, former Prime Minister, has to reply before you to the charge of high treason.'

Germany's whole preparation for war was based upon the success of her first onslaught. If it were going to be a 'merry war' it had to be above all a quick one. The first battle of the Marne upset all her calculations, and she with commendable promptitude realised that she could not possibly attain all her war aims purely by beating the Allies to their knees, that political methods would have to be employed in destroying not only the moral of the individual countries in the Alliance, but also the trust of the Allies in each other's ability to stick to the pact of no separate peace, signed in September 1914. Prussia, after suffering disaster at the time of the Seven Years' War, managed, thanks to quarrels among her adversaries, to end up victoriously. She sought to do the same again by political and propaganda services which were most lavishly supplied with funds. Germany was, indeed, the first of the belligerents to recognise that in war it is not so much the winning of battles that counts but the winning of victory,

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and that a victory may be all the more permanently a glorious victory if it is achieved without loss of blood. Therefore, her political and propaganda services were treated from the start as just as important a portion of victory machinery as the supply of munitions. Immediately after the first battle of the Marne, Germany intensified and largely developed her political action in Allied countries. Everywhere she sought means to destroy first of all national unity, by appealing to old political enmities or ambitious tendencies, by reviving anti-militarist and revolutionary agitation, by discussion on war responsibilities, by blaring forth the invincibility of German arms, and the desirability of a white peace without annexation or indemnity.

What did they achieve? In Belgium they created, with the help of a few fanatics or traitors, the Flemish activist movement, which still further accentuated existing differences between Walloon and Fleming, but in reality led to no lasting political results. In Great Britain, Germany was unable to do much, but the rôle of her agents in the Irish Rebellion is clear beyond doubt.

The German Foreign Minister, in reply to a request for 10,000,000 marks for propaganda in an Allied country, replied contemptuously that

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if the money were to be spent in Italy it would be wasted, so well satisfied was he that the work of corruption which led to the disaster of Caporetto had been accomplished. What followed in Russia, the cynical alliance of Russian Revolutionary Jewry with German aristocratic, military junkerdom, was a direct and luscious fruit of Germany's world-wide political activity, of her steady bombardment of Allied moral by money-bags.

In France, operations were more difficult, but they were carried out from the start with a steady persistence which showed that Germany did not make the mistake of under-estimating French fighting spirit. As has been shown in the preceding trials, Germany already by the end of 1914 had her machinery at work in France to undermine national spirit, and destroy army moral. A chain of newspapers was preaching the benefits of separate peace, tracts were in circulation maintaining that if war went on it was solely because Great Britain desired it to continue for her selfish ends. All that agitation led to grave mutinies upon the French Front in May and June 1917. It cannot be doubted for a minute that many of the men who took part in this work, while acting as agents for Germany, did so unconsciously and in complete ignorance of the fact, so abundantly proven at the Bolo, *Bonnet Rouge*, Malvy, Lenoir and Desouches

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trials, that the papers in which they wrote were the property of the German Secret Service.

No one in his right senses would accuse Joseph Caillaux of having betrayed his country for sordid considerations of money. The prosecution itself was at pains to dissociate itself from any such idea. But Germany, having created this vast machinery for the manufacture of a separate peace with France, sought for a man who would be capable of utilising it, and that man they without question felt that they had in Caillaux. As he himself, in his modest manner, has explained, his pre-war policy with regard to Germany was one of 'European conciliation,' firm and peaceful, which by its loyalty and energy had aroused the admiration of all Germany. This, according to Caillaux, was the reason why towards the end of 1914 he was placed upon a pedestal by the German press as being one, if not the only, reasonable statesman in France.

A dispatch from Baron von Schoen, German Ambassador in Paris, dated March 1913, which only came to light during the trial, shows how high were Germany's hopes in his policy. In this dispatch, which bears a minute in the Emperor's handwriting, von Schoen reports Caillaux as having said in conversation with an intimate friend that he would do all in his power to defeat the

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Three Years' Military Service Bill, whereby France was trying to meet Germany's preparations for war, and that when he next took power he would 'work again for an *entente* on a big scale with Germany and with better success than two years before.'

The advocacy of such a policy, while permissible in peace-time, obviously became impossible with France bleeding under the invader's heel and with her signature attached to the September Pact of London. That Caillaux, maddened by thwarted ambition, failed to see this, and that he pursued his personal policy, entering into direct contact with enemy agents in order to bring about a white peace and the repudiation of the Alliances of France, was the case for the prosecution. In the formal language of the court, Caillaux was charged with having 'since war was declared, namely in 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917, both in France and abroad, plotted against the security of the State by manœuvres and machinations, by intelligence with the enemy tending to further the enemy's undertakings against France or her Allies, and of acting in such a manner as to favour the progress of enemy arms.'

The evidence brought forward to justify this formidable indictment concerned the prisoner's activities in Brazil in 1914, in Paris in 1915 and 1916, in Spain and Italy in 1916 and 1917. In

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October 1914, Caillaux, who was then acting as paymaster to General Brugère's Group of Territorial Divisions, began to find military life insupportable. He had quarrelled with his superior officers, had been sentenced to close arrest, and longed for a sphere of activity where his importance would receive more recognition than in the narrowness of soldiers' discipline. Administrative or political employment could only be found for him in France at the risk of creating a scandal. The Government as a whole were anxious to be freed from his irksome presence, so through the good offices of his friend Malvy, Minister of the Interior, he was dispatched to South America, well out of harm's way, it was thought, at the head of a mission to study the supply resources of Brazil and inquire into Franco-South American cable facilities. He arrived at Rio de Janeiro on 5th December 1914, and a curious proof of the interest taken by the German Government in his movements was soon discovered among German papers found in Alsace at the end of the war, in the shape of a cable from the German Minister in Brazil asking Berlin for '100,000 marks for Press and Caillaux,' a request immediately followed by the remittance required. Here again the Prosecutor repudiated any thought that the Germans imagined that they could buy Caillaux, he merely

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used the fact as an indication of the anxiety of Germany to get her agents into contact with Caillaux in order to discover to what extent his Germanophil views had been altered by Germany's aggression and the horrors with which it was accompanied. Caillaux shortly after his arrival made acquaintance with a singularly attractive young man, Count Minotto, whose parentage was so mixed, according to the prosecution, that he may have thought it quite natural to conceal his German status beneath an Italian birth certificate. His mother was a Bavarian actress, Carolina Sorma, who enjoyed a certain celebrity in her day in Germany. His father was a Viennese of Greek origin, who, in order to satisfy his wife's longing for a title, assumed the extinct Venetian title of Count Minotto. James, the boy, was born in Berlin and was employed by the Deutsche Bank, London, a few months before the war, when he was a welcome guest at the German Embassy in Carlton House Terrace. On the outbreak of war he migrated to New York, where he got a post in the Guaranty Trust Company, which sent him on a mission to Brazil. Within a very short while after the arrival of M. and Madame Caillaux, Count James Minotto had become *persona gráta*. He accompanied them everywhere, and became particularly intimate at Buenos Ayres, where he was

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widely supposed to be M. Caillaux's secretary. He was certainly well fitted for the task of sounding out Caillaux. Extremely intelligent, an artist, a remarkable linguist, well versed in financial affairs, and a thorough man of the world, he soon found the means of becoming a point of contact between Caillaux and that German diplomat, Count von Luxburg, whose name will go down to history coupled with his famous recommendation that all ships torpedoed by German submarines should be *spurlos versenkt*. Minotto, who was later interned as a suspect in the United States, declared in his evidence that after he told Caillaux that he knew Count Luxburg intimately, Caillaux said: 'You know, Minotto, that I have always been in favour of Franco-German *rapprochement*, and I believe that the Germans have some confidence in my policy, but if they expect that when I get into power I can carry on a policy tending to a Franco-German *rapprochement*, it is absolutely essential that they should, now that France is at war, take an antagonistic attitude towards me. If they expect anything they must meanwhile attack me in the most violent fashion in their Press, and above all don't let them talk of the Congo and the Morocco Treaties as being of benefit to them. . . . If you know Luxburg you might, if occasion arises, let him know this.'

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Minotto repeated a further conversation that took place after Caillaux had booked his homeward passage in the *Araguaya*. It was at a moment when shipping was exposed to attack by a few German raiders still at large. Caillaux said: 'As I have told you, I dare not meet Count von Luxburg personally, but from all you have told me of him and his attitude he appears to me to be a reasonable kind of man. I am sure that in some way or other he must be in communication with the German cruisers, and I should be much obliged if he could arrange so that I may return to France safe and sound. This, moreover, would be in their own interests, if they think fit to give so much importance to my personality and trust my policy.'

Pressed for further explanations, Minotto continued: 'My personal impression, based on my frequent conversations with M. Caillaux, is that on the one hand he did not wish to be useful to Germany in the sense of "serving" her, but that on the other hand he was so very ambitious that he was ready to use any means to his end. . . . I base it also on his request to be attacked by the German press, and on other occasions when he always displayed the fiercest ambition to obtain power again at whatever cost. He was always discontented, and in all our conversations sought to convince me of the injustice done towards him

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in leaving him on one side. He was so bitter in his hatred against his enemies that not only I, but everyone, had no doubt but that his ambition to regain office at any price and his *amour propre* were his first consideration.'

His rage against Poincaré was particularly venomous. Indeed, in conversation with Minotto and with others, he not only accused the then President of the Republic of having gone to war rather than face a Caillaux triumphant after the acquittal of his wife, but he also charged him with having furnished Calmette with the documents used in the *Figaro* – in Caillaux's eyes perhaps as great a crime as the first. The evidence of the President of the Republic was taken on this point. It affords ample confirmation of Caillaux's language to Count Minotto, a German agent, but is perhaps of more interest as throwing light upon the jungle methods obtaining in French political life. M. Poincaré declared that a few months before Madame Caillaux's trial for the murder of Gaston Calmette, Caillaux boasted publicly that he would produce evidence at the trial to show that he (the President) had furnished Calmette with material for his campaign, and that Calmette was a constant visitor at the Elysée. When Poincaré was leaving on his official visit to the Tsar on the eve of war he mentioned this matter to M. Viviani,

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the Prime Minister, and to M. Bienvenu-Martin, Minister of Justice, and with the latter he left a charge of 'perjury against any witness testifying to that effect.'

The fidelity with which Minotto reported Caillaux's conversations to his chief, Count Luxemburg, including his request that he should be attacked by the German press and not praised, and that the safety of his crossing should be arranged for, may be seen in a dispatch from Bernstorff, German Ambassador in Washington, forwarding to the Wilhelmstrasse a cable from Count Luxemburg:

'Caillaux, after a short stay, left Buenos Ayres, returning direct to France, evidently on account of Desclaux scandal in which he sees personal attack. Of the President and of the present French Government, with the exception of Briand, he speaks with contempt. He clearly sees through British policy. Does not take into account complete collapse of France. Sees in war now British struggle for life. Although talks a lot of indiscretions and crude policy of Wilhelmstrasse, and professes to believe in German atrocities tendency his policy barely altered in any degree. Caillaux has been touched by politeness I have shown him indirectly; insists how necessary for him to be circumspect as French Government has

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him watched here. Warns us against excessive eulogies given him by our Press, especially *Neue Freie Presse*; would prefer that Mediterranean Congo treaty be criticised. Our praises ruining his position France. Caillaux coldly received here. Nothing new in his report on Brazil (Minotto had obligingly made copies of it for Caillaux on the typewriter). He'll first of all stay in his constituency France. Fears fate Jaurès (who was assassinated) if goes Paris.'

The second cable reports the departure of the *Araguaya* with important papers and Caillaux, adding: 'In event capture Caillaux should be treated with discreet courtesy and politeness. Can you warn our cruisers?'

It can be seen from these two cables how well Minotto carried out his task. Germany was justified in believing that when the time came she could count upon Caillaux to resume his pre-war policy of Franco-German friendship; she knew his feelings towards the existing Government in France. She saw the wisdom of his request that the German press should no longer ring with his praises. As a result of Minotto's reports to Count Luxburg the great German war machine got to work, and months later, through Secret Service channels, and from papers found upon dead Germans at the Front, France discovered with

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what an expenditure of effort Germany was trying to repair her mistake. Indeed, early in 1915, a few weeks after Caillaux's return to France, the German General Staff issued an order giving effect to Caillaux's wishes. In July, the Third German Army issued a secret order which was found on a German body. It clearly was a case of cause and effect, and read as follows:

'It seems that statements by Caillaux and other French politicians who are not entirely hostile to Germany have been thrown from the German into the French trenches. This gives the French Government a means of attacking these men, whose action may still be of great advantage to us. This must be stopped entirely.'

Upon the German press there fell a shower of circulars and wireless orders instructing them to abstain from any eulogious mention of Caillaux, and when the *Almeyreda-Bonnet Rouge* scandal burst, the press was threatened with every kind of penalty if Caillaux's name appeared in connection with it.

Only when Clemenceau began proceedings against Caillaux were these muzzling orders repealed, and the German newspapers were once again allowed to acclaim Caillaux not only as the greatest French financier but also as the greatest French patriot. In fact one German agent,

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Ezraty by name, who was employed at Barcelona, put forward a scheme for spreading in France the ingenious idea that the charges against Bolo and Caillaux were really due to diabolical machinations of German Secret Service men aiming at creating panic, distrust and anarchy. Ezraty hoped by this means 'to be of the greatest service to these two men and their partisans.'

Germany, rightly or wrongly, during Caillaux's South American visit, acquired from Minotto and Luxburg definite confirmation of her belief that in spite of the war Caillaux could still be counted upon to follow a policy of Franco-German friendship, and that some day he might prove to be the dissolving agent of the Allies' Pact of London, and the maker of a separate peace, of which Russia would bear the burden, and which would leave Great Britain to carry on the struggle alone. He was clearly, therefore, a personage to be handled with sympathetic circumspection, and it was equally necessary to remain in contact with him. This leads to the next knot in the net in which Caillaux became entangled.

(4) GERMANY AT WORK

It was the murder of Calmette by Madame Caillaux that provided the men used by Germany

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in the next act of the drama, in an endeavour to turn to account the knowledge she had gained in South America of Caillaux's political frame of mind.

A Hungarian named Lipscher offered to get into communication with the ex-Prime Minister of France, with whom he had been in relations during the trial of Madame Caillaux. Lipscher at that time had offered to sell some documents to Caillaux which purported to show that the murdered editor of the *Figaro* had accepted large subsidies from the Hungarian Government in connection with the issue of a Hungarian loan. His evidence was not produced, and when Lipscher left Paris on the outbreak of war he was a creditor of Caillaux's for some £50 or £60. He was soon attached to the German Secret Service in Brussels, where he lived with his mistress, a Madame Duverger. He was of the regular type of low class ne'er-do-well from which the dregs of most secret services are recruited. He had blackmailed a bit, thieved a little, and in the course of a highly-variegated existence had been a pedlar, interpreter, broker, canvassing-agent, journalist and a merchant of thermometers. What money he made he gambled away, and apparently the one thing he could not lose was his reputation. In Brussels this individual - this would-be witness at Madame

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Caillaux's trial – is placed in relations with Baron von Lancken, who had been Councillor of the German Embassy in Paris, and played an important part in Caillaux's secret negotiations over the Agadir affair.

As the Procureur-Général remarked, it may well be asked why Germany should have employed a man as discredited as was Lipscher in the delicate mission to Caillaux. His duty, however, was only to inform Caillaux of Germany's intentions, and it was perhaps better that a man of little note should be employed, who could later on be thrown over, or replaced by a negotiator of a more important character.

Lipscher, having failed to get his passports through Switzerland and Holland, entered into correspondence with Caillaux; and his mistress, Madame Duverger, succeeded not only in reaching Paris, but even in having more than one interview with that statesman. It is doubtful whether the whole of the Lipscher correspondence was found by the police, but in any case it began in the early part of 1915, when he wrote to Caillaux from the Hague to the effect that it was essential that he should see him in a matter of the utmost interest to Caillaux and his colleagues. In October 1915, Madame Duverger called on Caillaux to get a *sauf-conduit* to enable Lipscher to come to France

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as the bearer of peace proposals. Madame Duverger declared in evidence that Caillaux promised to do all he could to satisfy her.

On 4th November 1915, Lipscher, still in Holland, wrote to Caillaux, saying among other cryptic things: 'You will, therefore, have found out that Oscar sends me to tell you that Benoit concentrates all his future hopes on you. After personal inquiry at Benoit's, I can state as a fact that there is not one of your big concern who is so much in favour with Benoit as yourself. But what surprised me most are the concessions they are prepared to make, especially through your intervention. I know what I am talking about, because I did not want to leave Geneva without having a list of what was wanted. I repeat therefore that with a *simple geste* everything can be re-established, in fact even more than that, which will astonish everyone. You will probably say that it is impossible, and as to that may I remark that your friendship is far too precious for me to tell you anything but absolutely certain facts. You will have to judge and appreciate.'

Ten days later came another letter in the same veiled code: 'I have arrived here (Zurich) from the main office at Berne, for Oscar's employer, M. Jadot, has furnished me with information with regard to future things through his representative

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at Berne. . . . I am very happy to-day, for I am now quite sure that the big business will only be done through you.'

In order properly to understand the meaning of these documents, and in particular of the next, it is necessary to explain that Lipscher had invented a sort of home-made code in which 'the Company' was the French Government.

Jadot was Herr von Jagow, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Caron was Caillaux.

Oscar was Baron von Lancken, and

Benoit was the German Government.

Lipscher, having as he thought brought Caillaux to the point, became more explicit in his next communication, which was addressed to M. Michel, Caillaux's private secretary. In this document, under the transparent mask of business affairs, Lipscher assured Caillaux again that the terms he would receive from Germany would astound him, but that, while Herr von Jagow realised that Caillaux would have to make arrangements with his friends for his return to power, it would, nevertheless, be wise for him to meet a German emissary, so as to be ready to strike when a favourable opportunity arose. The bait held out to Caillaux was nothing less than the evacuation of French territory and the creation of some form

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of autonomous State of Alsace-Lorraine. A previous letter reached Caillaux marked 'Opened by the Military Authorities,' and for the first time he hastened to write in reply that it was an insult to him to make such proposals, that they would not be entertained for a moment, and only worried his secretary and himself. When Caillaux triumphantly pointed to the reply as a complete vindication of his attitude, he was asked how it was that weeks before, knowing Madame Duverger to be a German agent, and having in his possession Lipscher's earlier proposals, he did not immediately inform the authorities and have the woman arrested. Caillaux, on this point, appealed to the evidence of M. Briand and of M. Viviani, who both in the most formal manner denied that Caillaux had ever breathed a word to them about the matter of Germany's proposals.

M. Jadot, however, did not apparently take very seriously the indignant tone of Caillaux's letter breaking with Lipscher, for a bigger and more mysterious individual soon tried to take his place — a man who was in the background of all the big German plots, manufactured in Switzerland, against the Allies, the man who sent Almeyreda to suicide and Duval to the traitor's stake, the man who with German Secret Service funds financed the infamous *Red Bonnet*.

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M. Caillaux, while fearing assassination in Paris, was evidently no believer in taking precautions. If you wanted to know the ex-Prime Minister you just rang him up and fixed an appointment. In just this way did Caillaux receive a Swiss business man, whose name he had forgotten, who, knowing Caillaux's interest in economic questions, wanted to discuss with him the state of Franco-Swiss trade. This favoured visitor was apparently not in business for his health, for when introduced he pulled out an envelope in which were two notes, one stating 'M. Lipscher does not seem to be desirable as intermediary. I am at your disposal and am authorised to establish the relations you desire.' The other slip of paper bore nothing but the name and address in Berne of H. A. Marx - Marx of Mannheim, Marx of the San Stefano Syndicate, Marx the great corrupter.

M. Caillaux states that he immediately told the man to leave the house. He was, however, unable to give any satisfactory explanation as to why he took no steps to inform the police of the presence in Paris of this mysterious German agent, or as to why he carefully kept Marx's address in a safe at Florence which, after his arrest, revealed a number of exceedingly interesting private papers. With regard to the first steps taken by Lipscher in the matter, Caillaux declared that he thought on the

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one hand that he was being blackmailed by Lipscher, and that the letters written by Madame Duverger reporting her conversations with Caillaux had been dictated by Lipscher, who, by showing them to his German employers, hoped to be rewarded.

It certainly is true that Lipscher in his letters to Caillaux asks for the money still owing to him for his work in connection with the trial of Madame Caillaux, and that Caillaux did, as an act of compassion, give Madame Duverger the sum of frs. 500. Even if Caillaux had been right in seeing in the whole affair an audacious attempt at blackmail, he could surely have expected the protection of his friend the Minister of the Interior, M. Malvy, against such an act by an enemy subject, and one deliberately posing as a direct secret agent of the German Minister for Foreign Affairs. The appearance of Marx upon the scene shows conclusively that Caillaux was, to say the least of it, mistaken, in imagining that the Lipscher correspondence represented anything as innocent as blackmail; and the prosecution was at pains to point out that the visit of the Marx emissary preceded by but a few days the first subsidies made by Marx to the *Bonnet Rouge*, which had been deprived of the secret service money it had up till then received from Caillaux's friend, Malvy.

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Whatever judgment one may form of Caillaux's attitude in the Lipscher and Marx episodes, it is difficult not to admire the persistency with which Germany kept to her course in dealing with him. Having ascertained through Minotto that his general ideas of European policy, and in particular of Franco-German relations, had not been greatly modified by the experiences of war, that his arrogance was undiminished, and that his hatred for those who had kept him from power had only been increased, Germany proceeded to dangle her bait in front of him in Paris through Lipscher and Madame Duverger, who stated that Caillaux, in refusing the proposed negotiations, had replied: 'Wait, it's too soon for the moment.'

Germany no doubt felt after these various soundings that if a movement could be created for a separate peace with France which would leave Germany free to deal with Great Britain, Caillaux would inevitably become involved in it. She, therefore, set to work to intensify the output of her 'defeatist' press in France, and it is notable that Caillaux was in varying degrees intimate with the most important traitors employed by Germany. with Bolo Pasha and P. Lenoir, who were executed, with Almeyreda, who was found dead in a gaol with a bootlace round his throat, as well as with the *Bonnet Rouge* gang. Thanks to Marx's money,

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the *Bonnet Rouge* gave birth to a number of less important if equally scandalous publications, intended to persuade war-weary France of the impossibility of beating the Germans and of the advisability of accepting favourable terms while they could still be obtained. Caillaux did not believe in the possibility of a French victory, and therein lies the explanation of his attitude, which, indeed, was thrown into sharp relief in the documents found after his arrest in the safe he had rented in Florence.

In addition to some curious notes about the private life of some of his most eminent colleagues, including M. Briand; besides a report of his politics and a study of his life, there was also an extract from his tax returns. The most suggestive of the documents in the safe at Florence was the rough outline for a *coup d'état*, in preparation for the day when a separate peace became a necessity.

It was difficult, sitting in the Senate Galleries at the trial, not to appreciate the embarrassment felt by M. Caillaux in trying to explain, to a court composed of Parliamentarians, his proposals for sending Parliament packing, and for arresting a number of Senators. The programme he sketched out was aptly described by the Procureur-Général as a programme of immediate peace with Germany and of civil war and *coup d'état* at home.

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The President of the Court remarked before touching on the two chief documents, that since they had not been published, and had in no way been put into execution, no charge was based upon them, and he thought them vital as indicating that already, in April 1915, the accused was persuaded that it would be hopeless for the Allies to expect to win through.

The plan was roughly as follows:

I - AT THE FRONT

- (1) Restore all their powers and functions to the Prefects and the civil administration.
- (2) Change every army commander and general. General Sarraill to be Commander-in-Chief. General Gerard or Dalstein to be Military Governor of Paris. Use Generals Legay and Lartigne and Colonel Sardat (who had shown themselves to be 'old Republicans').

II - INTERIOR

- (1) Send the Chamber off on holiday if the Session can't be closed.
- (2) Certain regiments, notably Corsican Regiment and 27th and 28th Territorial Regiments, to be called to Paris. (These

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last two regiments were recruited from Caillaux's constituency in the Sarthe, and he presumed that they were devoted to the Republic. It was clearly a case of *La République, c'est Moi!*)

- (3) Arrest and prosecute for plotting against the safety of the State the direct and indirect authors of the war (among whom Caillaux placed Poincaré, Barthou and the big metallurgists), the directors of some of the big papers and the leaders of the Royalist *Action Française*.
- (4) Gangs were to be organised to keep in subjection the opposing Royalist and National organisations.

III

Government – A small Ministry of dependable men, the list of which can be drawn up according to circumstances. Jean Dupuy at the Interior.

PEACE

In whatever conditions peace is made, whether it be a separate peace after a victory won by the new Government, or whether the Government is formed to make it, nothing shall be done or concluded without a special mandate from the

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country. Two procedures. Either convoke a National Assembly, or get dissolution passed by the Senate and proceed with the election of two-thirds of the Senate. Whatever procedure be adopted, the elections should be made on a Government platform.

The Treaty of Peace must, in every case, imply an obligation to submit political treaties to a referendum, the prohibition of making war, or even ordering mobilisation without previous referendum. Neutrals, and particularly North and South America, would be entrusted with the duty of obtaining observance of these clauses, and would agree to confiscate all property and all subjects of States who might fail to honour their undertaking.

RUBICON

If possible get the following voted into law. During a period of ten months after the promulgation of the present law, the President of the Republic is invested with the right of making decrees with the Council of Ministers which shall have legislative and constitutional force.

Possible collaborators: Use Landau (a notorious blackmailer sentenced to a long term in the

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Bonnet Rouge case) and Almeyreda. The *Matin* and *Le Journal* were to be taken over and Almeyreda was to play an important part in the running of these papers.

Viviani was to be given an Embassy. Appoint Ceccaldi, a Corsican friend of Caillaux, Prefect of Police and Controller of the *Sûreté-Général*.

When the Chambers meet and peace has been voted they'll be made to pass the Rubicon. It shall be forced upon them.

The second document, a long and extremely able article by Caillaux on the origins and outbreak of the war, was entitled *Les Responsables*. It contained a frank eulogy of himself and a subtle but unmistakable attack upon the President of the Republic, Poincaré, and his advisers, whom he practically accused, if not of having been responsible for the war, at any rate of not having been over desirous of stopping it. After arguing that he (Caillaux) alone was capable of carrying on the great Republican traditions of Gambetta and Jules Ferry, he laments the fact that with Poincaré in power reactionary nationalism triumphed over Radicalism. It was an era of 'national pride,' but in reality a policy of *fanfaronnades* and imprudence, of periodical military displays, of challenges

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to Germany in the 'big press,' German firms were blacklisted and other means were taken to excite public opinion with regard to the foreign situation. 'But during that time nothing of note was done to improve our war material. More than that, the construction of heavy artillery ordered by Caillaux was postponed.' This campaign succeeded in inflaming people's minds. 'We are sure, however, that no one at that time wanted war, the danger of which was never realised, especially by Poincaré. He reproaches Poincaré with the 'Three Years' Service Bill which Barthou undertook to see through Parliament, 'just as he would assume any task so long as it gave him power,' and enabled him to satisfy his 'vulgar desire to show himself off.' 'The elections of 1914 gave Poincaré a severe jolt. There was only one way of meeting the danger - to strike down at whatever cost the man who represented Radicalism - Caillaux. A campaign of appalling violence was organised against him, which ended in the tragedy of Calmette's murder. When there is trouble at home make a diversion abroad. Did Poincaré and his friends hope that a war would save them from a fall, or was the war, as is declared by Poincaré's defenders, provoked and desired by the German Emperor? Both assertions are correct. Poincaré's adversaries maintain that the rapid decision of Russia to mobilise

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was due to his influence over the Tsar, and declare that ever since 1912 Poincaré opposed all pacific influence around the Tsar. They add that during his visits to Russia the President signed secret agreements, and that he it was who, in St. Petersburg, when the first flames of conflagration broke out, threw oil upon the fire instead of seeking to extinguish it. Without accepting these accusations too literally, it can be said that while he was President, Poincaré endeavoured to arouse war-like feelings in Russia and in France and incurred singularly heavy responsibilities. How could Poincaré and his friends look upon war with a light heart? How did they come to prepare the whirlwind? Why did they only make vague efforts to prevent it? Why, at the last moment, did they let themselves be swept away by it? Without a doubt they wished to retain power and to escape from the growing difficulties of domestic politics that beset them.'

This summary reproduces those portions of *Les Responsables* which directly concern the trial. In the rest of the document Caillaux, writing anonymously, describes his policy in the past, and with a disarming conceit of certainty declares that if he, the great man of France, the successor of Gambetta, had only been in power, he would have been as effective as the late 'Good King Edward' in

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seeing to it that 'there'd been no war.' The two documents, taken together, written as they were in the early part of the war, show how certain Caillaux was that his turn would come, and how readily he would have sacrificed the Pact of London once he had seized power.

His explanations as to the documents were somewhat perfunctory. As to the first, it could not really be taken seriously. It noted merely the Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow. He had his own method of work and jotted down all sorts of ideas, altered, added and suppressed passages. He had a perfect right to make such notes. In the 'Plan' there were all sorts of 'incoherencies' and some 'puerilities.' For instance, the summoning to Paris of two regiments from his constituency was inspired by two ideas. First of all, he had reason to suppose that the men were good Republicans, and secondly, they had been kept too steadily at the Front. They had been unfairly treated. Or if they liked, he wanted to give them a spell of duty in Paris for electioneering reasons. As for *Les Responsables*, it was just material which he might have used in working up a speech for a secret sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, and in any case he claimed the right to think, and could not imagine that 130 years after the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights

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of Man any individual could be tried for his thoughts.

The reading of *Les Responsables* and the 'Plan' is a useful introduction to the third important portion of the trial, which related Caillaux's activities and frequentations in Italy, where his attitude caused such a scandal that the French Government telegraphed to the Italian Government saying that they would not object if Caillaux were expelled, and asking the Italians, if they took this step, to lay their hands upon Caillaux's papers.

(5) THE CLOSE

A prominent feature of Caillaux's policy was the formation of a Latin League, but before he personally could move in such a matter he had first of all to remove the suspicions entertained with regard to him by King Alfonso, ever since the beginning of 1912, when relations between France and Spain were somewhat strained over Moroccan affairs. In Spain it was supposed that he, or at any rate more than one prominent member of his party, had been behind the rioting in Barcelona at that time. The phrase, 'You've got to deal with Spaniards with a whip,' was commonly attributed to Caillaux, and dramatic confirmation of the rumour that Caillaux had threatened to

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have King Alfonso assassinated was provided by the evidence of M. William Martin. Just before leaving the French Embassy at Madrid to become M. Poincaré's right-hand man at the Foreign Office, he was summoned by the King, who said: 'Since you will see the new Prime Minister there is something I wish you to know. When M. Caillaux was Prime Minister he sent an emissary to me who uttered threats against my person. I wish Poincaré to know that. I am not frightened by these menaces, but in case an accident should happen I have written down the facts in a document which lies in a sealed envelope in my strong-room. That's what I want M. Poincaré to know.'

Humbert and Bolo succeeded in obtaining a conversation with the King in 1916. King Alfonso, in relating this interview, said that 'Humbert spoke of Caillaux, telling me that he had the greatest esteem for me and took the deepest interest in Spanish affairs. This astonished me, for he is not looked upon as being my best friend exactly. Finally I got the impression, firstly that the object, or one of the objects, of M. Humbert's journey was to reconcile Caillaux and myself; secondly, that Bolo accompanied him in order to confirm all his assurances. I felt that Caillaux, who might have resumed office at any moment, wanted, by a courteous *démarche*, to

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efface the bad effect upon me of certain remarks attributed to him a few years ago.'

Having thus tried to make his peace with Spain, Caillaux's next move was towards the other 'Latin sister,' Italy. Madame Caillaux preceded him, travelling under her maiden name as Madame Rainouard, in which name Caillaux's passport was also issued. No special significance could be attached to this desire for incognito, as wherever the couple went under their own name trouble was always a possibility. Madame Caillaux awaited her husband in Rome in the middle of December 1916. Things were going badly in the Allied camp. Rumania had crumpled up. Bucharest was in the hands of the enemy. King Constantine of Greece had thrown off his mask. French soldiers and sailors had been assassinated in Athens itself, and there was the Ministerial crisis in Great Britain. Germany had launched her hypocritical appeal for peace, which had aroused the strong neutralist party in Italy to renewed activity. That was the moment chosen by M. Caillaux for his visit to Rome, when he seems to have thrown to the wind all caution and reserve in his conversation. Italy at the time was going through the preliminary pangs of the moral depression which later led to Caporetto, and it is not a matter for surprise that rumours and reports of Caillaux's

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language spread stupefaction and dismay among the Italian Government as well as among the diplomats of Rome. M. de Giers, Russian Ambassador, Sir Rennell Rodd, British Ambassador, the Rumanian and Portuguese Ministers, all reported fully to their Governments in the sense of M. de Giers' evidence at the trial, which was as follows: 'M. Caillaux, during his stay in Rome in 1916, aroused considerable emotion, by remarks which spread and accredited the idea that France was exhausted, and that both she and Italy would have to make peace. Such talk was calculated to arouse suspicions as to France's action, and acts and words of Caillaux had such a dissolving and demoralising effect upon people's minds that I thought it indispensable to warn my Government, and to beg it to take the necessary steps to put an end to such a state of things.' Prince Ghika, the Rumanian Minister, reported that Caillaux had said: 'Everyone must save his own skin. Rumania has come into the war. She'll have to pay for the breakage.' Sir Rennell Rodd stated that he had been informed in many quarters that Caillaux, soon after his arrival in Rome, spread the idea that exhausted Italy and France should soon give up the struggle and lean back on Germany.

It is curious to note that, as during his South American journey, as in Paris, so in Italy

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Caillaux was surrounded by German agents. At Turin he was met by Ré Riccardi, who had to leave the Italian Army as the result of a gaming scandal, and was afterwards prosecuted for treason. In Rome the ex-deputy, Cavallini, is at the station to receive him. Cavallini was a German agent from the beginning of the war, and helped Bolo to negotiate the purchase of *Le Journal* with German money supplied through the ex-Khedive Abbas Hilmi. Bennicardi, de Belmonte, Dini and Buonanno were among Caillaux's Roman companions. They were all afterwards prosecuted for high treason. In Naples he was the guest of Scarfoglio, editor of the *Mattino*, who at that very moment was distinguishing himself by a virulent anti-British campaign. In such company it was, perhaps, natural that Caillaux should speak out, but it is difficult to imagine even a *diplomate de café* saying, as Caillaux was declared in evidence to have said after dinner at Cavallini's, that the time was nigh when Poincaré, who was the man really responsible for the war, would be overthrown by the people's wrath; that France and Italy were shedding their blood solely in the interest of Great Britain; and that it was more than ever necessary for France and Italy to unite closely and to form with Germany a league against Great Britain, who was Europe's most

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formidable enemy. Caillaux, not content with preaching defeatism to the band of German agents and Italian defeatists, also sought contact with members of the Italian Government. Salandra managed to avoid him, but he had a long conversation with Signor Martini, who was Minister for the Colonies in the Salandra Cabinet when Italy came into the war.

Historian, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, and a life-long friend of France, Signor Martini was also a man of method, and for years he was in the habit of keeping a very comprehensive diary. Although with him M. Caillaux somewhat moderated the tone of his language, Signor Martini was sufficiently impressed by his remarks as to jot them down very fully on the day of their meeting. They were indeed remarks of an unusually disturbing character, and in them the prosecution claimed that Caillaux personally gave practical expression to the ideas and policies which had been formed in his head and his heart by his lust for power and his wounded and arrogant vanity. 'I have just come from my talk with Caillaux,' wrote Signor Martini in his diary, 'and I don't want to delay a minute in recording it. Naturally the subject started at once was Germany's proposal [for peace]. We agreed that a refusal to negotiate would be a grave political

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mistake. He believes that the hour for peace has not yet struck. A last effort must be made in the spring (this was 17th December 1916). But it would be a most dangerous illusion to think that the war can last until next autumn. France has lost 1,500,000 men: 1,100,000 killed, and 400,000 so badly wounded that they are no longer capable of any sort of work. There is not a general who believes that the Germans can be driven out of the ten departments they occupy. Man-power resources are: the 1917 contingent, 200,000 men; the 1918 contingent, 150,000. They will be enough to fill the gaps. France now has only 2,500,000 for the Front, perhaps not so many. Public opinion is depressed. Among the soldiers the old enthusiasm has died out. He has had letters from soldiers from his constituency which leave no doubt as to the spirit of the troops. They end by *A bas la Guerre*, and even *Vive Brizon*, the deputy who was expelled from the Chamber of Deputies for having expressed these feelings. He knows Italy, and knows that our public opinion is not very different; perhaps it is different in the army because Italy has fought for a year less. I told him of the rumour that Germany was prepared to make concessions to the Western Continental Powers, to France and to Italy, and that there were folk who said that the Austrian

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Ministerial crisis was caused by this, and that M. Koerber had resigned rather than assume responsibility for the territorial concessions to be made to Italy. Caillaux knew nothing of these rumours, and took the opportunity of saying that he also thinks that Germany, and Austria, whom she completely dominates, are prepared to enter upon the path of concession to Italy and France. As to France, he believes that peace will be made upon simple terms [he did not foresee the Treaty of Versailles!] the evacuation of the occupied regions, and the cession of a portion of Alsace-Lorraine, or even without this concession.'

'Are you not afraid?' I asked him, 'that you will be asked for Morocco?'

'We cannot cede Morocco at any price; we can't have Germany behind our back. She does not mean to press her point as far as that. She, too, is not happy, and her proposals have certainly been moderated by the internal state of the country and by the threat of hunger.'

'But do you really think that France would make peace on the terms you have stated?'

'We can't go on. Even the output of munitions has dropped, owing to lack of raw material. And there are two facts you do not know which are of great importance. Algeria is in full revolution. So is Senegal. A sub-Prefect has been killed,

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and the column sent to suppress the revolt was surrounded and massacred. All that simply because we made the mistake of forcing conscription on the Arabs. Add to all that the work of our Socialists, less perhaps than that in Italy, and the hatred of our peasants for the war—I repeat we can't go on, and peace, to-day premature, will be an inevitable necessity by the autumn. Moreover, in autumn, after the losses of our spring offensive, we run the risk of having a British Army in France greater in numbers than our own and we can't and don't want that.'

Coming back to the question of peace Signor Martini asked: 'What about England? We are bound by the Pact of London.'

Caillaux replied: 'When England's got the reconstitution of Belgium she, too, will put up with peace. Her merchant marine is being destroyed by submarines. Besides there are many, indeed almost countless, people in England who are against the war. But I don't hide from myself that if Germany demands the return of her colonies England won't agree. She won't and can't consent to that.'

'And Russia?'

'Russia's bound to foot the bill. Poland is lost to her for ever. As for giving her Constantinople, do we, or even you, want to?'

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'We have promised it.'

'The promise is perhaps of older standing than you think. It was made by M. Poincaré when he went to Petrograd for the first time as Prime Minister. He aimed at becoming President of the Republic and he needed the votes of the Right. M. Isvolski, Russian Ambassador in Paris, could get them for him. I need say no more.'

'About Poincaré. Is it true that he is unpopular in France?'

'Unpopular? Detested is what you should say. . . .'

'What is your view about the Ministry?'

'I foresee an early crisis. Briand has lost all authority. He is a man without far-sighted views. He looks for a momentary success and does not worry about anything else. He more than anyone urged Rumania to come into the struggle, without concerning himself about the necessary help, without which it was easy to foresee everything that has happened was inevitable. This time again he has tried to get a Parliamentary success without worrying about the consequences of a wrong or premature step. When Briand falls, France has only three Prime Ministers left, Clemenceau, Caillaux and Barthou. Barthou is not possible, for he has flung himself into the arms of clerical

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reaction. . . . Caillaux's hour has not yet struck. Clemenceau remains.'

'But would Clemenceau be possible as Prime Minister with Poincaré as President of the Republic?'

'That's what we've got to ask ourselves. If it happens, either Clemenceau or Poincaré will go within two months. That's why I question the formation of a Clemenceau Ministry, and *faute de mieux* we shall have a Painlevé Ministry with war *à outrance* as its programme. It will make its great effort in the spring, and then will come a Ministry to make peace.'

As after this statement I remained silent for a few minutes, Caillaux asked me:

'What are you thinking about?'

'About your certainty of peace. England, Russia,' I began.

'I repeat that England will agree. Lloyd George will still make the great effort. Asquith is holding back waiting for its results. As for Russia, she'll turn towards Asia when she has overcome the revolution which is awaited by everybody as well as by the Russian Government. In any case you can't ask people to do impossible things. We are worn out, and we can't be asked to carry on the war lacking men and resources, when it will only result in useless slaughter.'

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Signor Martini, in a note, adds that Caillaux evidently expected to return to office in a Ministry formed to make the peace which he considered inevitable in autumn.

Caillaux, in talking in this manner to Signor Martini, was already speaking as Prime Minister of France; and, such were conditions in Italy, that the prosecution maintained that his words were more than the expression of his thoughts, but were a definite political act, whereby, after showing that France had no way out save through Peace without Victory, Caillaux sought to drag Italy with him along the road of separate peace.

Such, in its broad lines, was the case for the prosecution. Caillaux said to his servant, when he went to fight Clemenceau's demand to the Chamber for a suspension of his Parliamentary immunity: 'Alexandrine, the time has come. You must watch over Madame and prevent her making any desperate decision. I'll probably be arrested. If I go before a court-martial I may be shot. I'm going to defend myself like a lion, but they may spring some forgery or other on me. What can I do then? — If I go before the Senate, it does not give death sentences. It will then be a matter of exile, deportation or imprisonment. If I am sent to Clairvaux (the Central gaol) Madame may want to settle near me there so as to see me

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often. If so, you had better take a house in your name.'

He certainly did put up a leonine defence which covered every portion of his political and a good deal of his personal life. Nervously fingering the broad black ribbon of his monocle, he scorned to take much of the evidence seriously, and, indeed, it must be admitted that in an English Court of Law much of it could not have been admitted as being either relevant or evidence. He followed the method of denial in dealing with parts of the real evidence against him, and, in the charges made against him by French diplomats, he saw nothing but the 'satisfied vengeance of the conceited mediocrity' of the men of the Quai d'Orsay who had opposed his negotiations with Germany over Morocco. As for Lipscher and Minotto, how could anyone believe in the word of an enemy agent?

The charge against him having been declared to be political, he used to the full his right to make a political reply. He did so in a masterly fashion. At times the Senate resembled a university lecture-hall. Caillaux, in the midst of his lawyers, with plain-clothes men in discreet attendance, from his bench beneath the Presidential chair lectured to an extremely attentive audience; upon the great problem of economics and finance when dealing with the hostility aroused by his advocacy

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of an Income Tax: upon European politics when discussing the Agadir negotiations: on the Rights of Man in connection with the alleged plan for a *coup d'état* discovered in his safe at Florence. But his final effort was his best. He revealed that in his prison cell, and in the shade of the trees of the Malmaison rest home, he had thought deeply about the French Revolution, adding, with a touch of his naïve pride in himself: 'I know a little history, as you, Monsieur le Procureur, have more than reason to know. I have studied the cases of Malesherbes and Danton. The Public Prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville – I won't call him your predecessor – whose speeches I read in the Santé Prison – there could not be a more appropriate place in which to read them – accused Malesherbes of 'intelligence with the enemy.' He was condemned on this charge. "His private correspondence as well as the offer he made to defend Capet were but the result of a plot hatched in Pitt's Cabinet. He was only the agent of all the revolutionaries bribed by the English despot." So said Fouquier-Tinville. Intelligence with the enemy, already then this charge helped to crush men like Malesherbes. In reading Fouquier-Tinville's words I could not help linking them with another and a writer's formula. "It may happen," wrote Diderot, "that men become the victims of the law,

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but then there are two kinds of laws – some of equity; others which only find their sanction in the blindness or necessities of circumstance. It is but a temporary shame that covers those who have been guilty of infringing this latter category of laws – a disgrace which in time eventually belongs only to judges or countries guilty of profiting by those circumstances. Which, Socrates, or the judge who made him drink the hemlock, is held in dishonour to-day?” ’

Having thus brushed in a vast historical canvas with himself as Malesherbes and as Socrates, M. Caillaux continued: ‘I thought of another man with whom somewhat vague family tradition holds that I am related; his statue is not far from here. It is Danton. In order to strike the great statesman of the Revolution the fact that adventurers, enemy agents, had approached him was turned to profit. At grips with political necessities, displaying a tolerance which is sometimes necessary in political life, showing a trust which others have also indulged in, Danton had known the Chabots, Basires, Fabre d’Eglantine, Julien de Bordeaux . . . and Danton was included in the mass of those tried for plotting with the enemy. On merchantships papers were found full of nothing but hearsay and gossip which, I apologise for saying so, resemble some of the documents in this trial, and

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the prosecution sought to prove that the man who by his boldness had saved France in the great days of 1792 had been a foreign tool, the agent of a Monarchist plot. It was only a pretext, of course. What they were trying to destroy was Danton's policy.'

Having thus found an opportunity of comparing his fate with that of Danton, Caillaux came to his peroration, delivered with an intensity of passion which encarmined the bald dome of his forehead, and which would have been more impressive if the weakness of his voice had not led to shrillness.

'I shall not stoop to proclaim my innocence. Look at me. Look at me. Many among you have known me since my childhood. There are others who have known me since I first entered politics. Is not my innocence proclaimed by my whole being, even by my arrogance, if you like? Could I speak thus had I anything upon my conscience? Look at me when I cry out, "Never! Never!" Conversations with the enemy? Never, never, never have I thought to separate France from her Allies. Never throughout my whole life have I had a thought for aught but the welfare and greatness of my country. It is perhaps the last time that I shall speak in Parliament. I am fifty-seven years of age. I have a long political past which I confidently leave to history, assured as I

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am as to its judgment. . . . Gentlemen, I have finished. I have suffered all there is to suffer. I have borne all there is to be borne for years past, and particularly during these later years when I was ignominiously cast into gaol among common-law offenders for months and months. I am ready to support it all again, in the quiet peace of a conscience which can reproach itself with nothing. But I cannot believe, and I would not like to believe, that the most odious and most monstrous iniquity can triumph in the Senate of the Republic.'

The High Court refused to follow the prosecution in finding M. Caillaux guilty of having plotted against the safety of France abroad by manœuvres, machinations, and intelligence with the enemy, favouring the enemy's designs upon France and her Allies, and consequently of a nature to favour the progress of the enemy's armies; but returned a verdict of guilty of having, in France and abroad, maintained a correspondence which resulted in furnishing the enemy with information damaging to the military or political situation of France and her Allies, and condemned him to three years' imprisonment. M. Caillaux's long martyrdom came to an end on 21st April 1920, and he, having been in prison or in hospital since 14th January 1918, was released on the day following the verdict.

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He has since for a brief moment been once again Minister of Finance. Advancing age, private and public tragedy, have not dulled his ambition. But in politics, as in physical affairs, there is a pressure which tells as surely as that of the blood that the days of high adventure and subtle scheming, the dreams of power and revenge, are fading into fantasies of unsatisfied desire.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EDITH CAVELL'S BETRAYAL

SELDOM has a thicker smoke-screen been formed than that set up by British propaganda around the case of Edith Cavell. Seldom has it been so easy to hide facts by appealing to sentiments which were as right-hearted as they were muddle-headed. Propaganda's case was that Miss Cavell was a heroic British woman who, despite the sacred nature of her calling as hospital nurse, had been wantonly done to death. People, even in war-time, did not execute women, whatever their offence might be, and Germany, in carrying out the death sentence upon her, had only furnished another proof of her insatiable blood-lust.

No one can deny that Miss Cavell acted with courage, and her heroism was all the greater because she knew full well what she was doing and what were the risks she ran. Germany blundered badly in exacting the death penalty, and in carrying out the sentence without giving time for due consideration of the efforts of neutral America to

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save the prisoner; but it cannot be seriously disputed for a minute that under every code of international law Germany was justified in sentencing and shooting Miss Cavell. Had she merely out of pity given a meal to an escaping Allied soldier she made herself liable to that fate. With her eyes wide open to what she was about she went infinitely further, and, under cover of her professional privileges, played an important part, not only in speeding escaping Allied soldiers on their way to the Dutch frontier, but also in facilitating the movements of Allied secret service agents and the transmission of the information collected by Allied spy services.

An intimate and detailed relation of her activities, and of the quiet and steady courage with which she bore for nearly a year the nervous strain of the constant expectation of discovery, was given during the trial of a French soldier named Quien, who was charged with having been a spy in German service, and with having betrayed Edith Cavell.

Gaston Quien was a thoroughly villainous fellow. A barrister by profession, his practice had been mainly confined to defending himself unsuccessfully against charges of fraud and theft. He was in gaol at St. Quentin when the war broke out.

When he had served his sentence he found

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himself on the streets without a penny, and the Germans in occupation of the town. Poverty, however, did not prevent his seeing life. After a period of cheerful existence with women of the town, during which he fraternised with German troops and police, he found means through Miss Cavell's organisation of reaching Holland, travelling as one of the many French officers who had been left behind by the retreating tide of the French and British Armies after the battle of Charleroi; and had remained hidden by friendly farmers or lurking in Mormal Forest.

At the Hague he so impressed the French Military Attaché, Colonel Desprez, with his possible utility as a French agent that he persuaded him that it was his patriotic duty to return to Brussels and from there to assist the escape of French and British soldiers from the occupied regions, and to forward military intelligence.

Quien once again in Brussels had a variegated career. He was arrested one or twice by the Germans, but always got off with a sentence singularly lighter than that handed out to those arrested in his company. He was sent to a prison camp in Germany, where again he had preferential treatment, and where his fellow prisoners suspected him at once of being an *agent provocateur*.

In Brussels, thanks to his activities, scores of

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people were sentenced either to death or to long terms of imprisonment, including Miss Cavell, the Princesse Marie de Croy, the Comtesse de Belleville, and Mlle. Renkin, sister of the Colonial Minister. Feeling that they had perhaps exhausted the usefulness of this singular French lawyer in Belgium, the German intelligence service sent him then to Switzerland, where he got himself repatriated to France after acting a typical 'double' agent's part at Interlaken.

Quien's case, while it is a monument of human treachery and baseness, has this of good, that it summarises for history the bitter, unremitting opposition of free men and women to be slaves under the heel of an army of occupation. As Quien reached the depths, so the heights were scaled by countless men and women who cheerfully placed their anonymous lives on the altar of their country's ideals, either by fighting the terrible moral depression which weighs upon people under foreign rule (as was done by *La Libre Belgique*), by intelligence work, or by 'railroading' out of the occupied zones young men anxious to join in the struggle. The first organisation for this last purpose (for there were many) had as its chief object to save the thousands of French and British officers and men left in occupied territory after Mons and Charleroi.

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Its headquarters were at the château of the Prince de Croy at Bellignies on the Franco-Belgian frontier. The château acted as a receiving-station for the men to be sent on to Mons, then to Brussels, and thence, usually in charge of smugglers, the escape parties were conducted to the Dutch frontier. Along this road they were supplied with clothes, money, forged identity papers – many made by the Princesse de Croy herself – and lodging.

The names of the workers in the organisation were known only to its heads. Each member carried out his or her work in a definitely limited sphere; and once they had handed their man or men over to the next forwarding agent they heard no more about him. All the details of the machine were unknown to those who formed it, so that all the links of the chain which connected the north of France with Holland only knew the other links with which they were in definite contact.

The secret was kept until July 1915, when a traitor was found in the person of Quien. The well-meant indiscretions of a young country girl put him on the track of this agency of subterranean escape, and in May 1915 he introduced himself to a M. Maillard, the first local link in the chain near Landrecies. To him Quien introduced himself as a French officer, painting a vivid

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picture of his part in the battle of Charleroi, which did more credit to his imagination than to his veracity, for at the moment of Charleroi Quien was safely under lock and key in St. Quentin gaol. M. Maillard's suspicions as to the man's story were laid at rest when Quien quoted a number of people well known at St. Quentin as being among his friends. That evening death placed his seal upon the unwitting Miss Cavell. Quien was taken to the next link, a young woman ardent and strong in her patriotism, but frail by her passions. Quien, good-looking, *double-mètre* Quien, as he was called by reason of his height, turned to account his four days' stay in the lonely farm by seducing its mistress and borrowing money from her.

While he was engaged in laying siege to her heart several members of the organisation came out to inspect the man they were called upon to save. The visitors did not share the confidence his hostess had in him. In torrents of imaginative loquacity he told the least imaginable stories of his fighting prowess. In his magnificent mind he became not only a French officer, but a barrister and a doctor of medicine into the bargain. To listen to him you might have imagined that the entire attention of the German Army since the battle of Charleroi had been directed, not upon the march *nach Paris*, but upon finding the whereabouts

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of that most redoubtable person, Gaston Quien. Having once accepted him the organisation had to make the best of a bad job. But it took its precautions. He was taken to the next station at St. Vaast, with instructions that he should be forwarded directly to Mons instead of going first to headquarters at the Château de Bellignies. By an accident those instructions were ignored. So one evening Princesse Marie de Croy, who was in the habit, heroic even in peace-time, of receiving visitors without knowing who they were or who had sent them, was told to wait on the road outside the château gates. There one of the organisation appeared with a 'French officer.' The Princesse questioned him. He explained very politely, if extremely inaccurately, that he had twice escaped from his war imprisonment, and counted on the good services of the devoted women of the organisation to get over the Dutch frontier.

Quien 'was placed in a field for further examination as was always done,' explained the Princesse in her evidence, and was there questioned by the village curé and another local member. He met the Prince de Croy, who so far believed his story as to entrust him with a letter to his relative, the Prince de Ligne, at the Hague, and to lend him money. The Prince de Croy frequently used escaping officers to bear such letters to the Prince

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de Ligne, who usually found the contents of such interest that he communicated them to the French and British military attachés at the Hague. Quien was sent on to Mlle. Thuilliez, but the Prince and Princesse, reflecting that after all was said and done they had no real guarantee of the good faith of their messenger to Holland, asked her to obtain the letter and destroy it, which was done. Mlle. Thuilliez took him to Miss Cavell's Nursing Home. There a passage to Holland was arranged for him, but he missed it, and, to the great annoyance of Miss Cavell, who soon had trouble with him on account of his free and easy manners with her nurses and servants, remained in Brussels for over a fortnight. He spent a good deal of his time in town, and alarmed the whole organisation by his behaviour. He frequently returned to the Home drunk, and a system of night patrols had to be instituted to control his movements. Moreover, his conversational indiscretions in bars and cafés alarmed the organisation thoroughly, since he told anyone who cared to listen to him that he was a French flying officer, and frequently came to Brussels on secret service, when he stayed with Miss Cavell.

Finally Quien was told point-blank that if he wanted to go to Holland he had better go at once, and the next morning Madame Bodart (who was

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sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude for the service) took him, with sixteen other fugitives, as far as Turnhout, whence a smuggler in waiting took the party into Holland. At the Hague Quien called on the Prince de Ligne to give him news of the Prince de Croy, and then visited the French military attaché, who at that time knew nothing whatever about the escape organisation. Colonel Desprez was so struck with Quien's knowledge of the organisation, and of the spots where men lay hidden in Northern France and in Belgium, that he argued with Quien that it was his patriotic duty to return to Belgium on behalf of the French Intelligence Service. Quien accepted the proud mission – together with a few hundred francs on account of expenses – and Colonel Desprez saw him no more.

On 29th July Quien reappeared in Brussels, but Miss Cavell refused to lodge him. Next day, accompanied by a stranger whom he left in the street, he called on Madame Bodart, with whom he lunched. His hostess did not like the looks of the gentleman who strolled up and down the street waiting, and through glasses she was able to detect a false beard and a strange resemblance to Lieutenant Borgau, one of the heads of the German secret police in Brussels.

Quien was full of patriotic zeal, and told Madame

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Bodart that he had returned to organise an intelligence service. He asked a number of questions as to the best ways of getting across the Dutch frontier, expressed his desire to meet M. Baucq, an architect, who was one of the most active of the escape agents. M. Baucq was fetched and discussed matters in full confidence with Quien. M. Baucq left the house before Quien, who was rejoined at once by the gentleman with the false beard and followed Baucq. Two days later M. Baucq, young Bodart, and Mlle. Thuilliez, who were at his house, were arrested. Quien saw Madame Bodart next day. She told him that she was very anxious, as she had some compromising papers which ought to be taken at once to Madame Machiels. This packet was not handed to the latter until some days after, when one of its most important documents was missing. Quien asked Madame Machiels to indicate some place where he could sleep, and he obtained the address of Madame Adam and Madame Jacobs. They paid for their ill-judged hospitality by several years of imprisonment. Quien and his friends of the German police spent a busy time in the last week of July and the first weeks of August.

On 2nd August, Quien, still accompanied by Polizei-Leutnant Borgau, arrived in Mons, where he went to Madame Debève, and, speaking of

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Mlle. Thuilliez, he said: 'I know you are very fond of her. I am very influential, and if you want her to be free within a week hand me over her books and correspondence.' Madame Debève refused. Her only reply was to burn every document she possessed, which she did just before she was arrested, with her husband, who died in gaol.

Three days later the police made their great *coup* and arrested Miss Cavell. What happened no one can say. Quien has boasted that he was actually in the house when the arrest was made, and that he only escaped with great difficulty through a cellar-hole. Proof was produced at his trial showing that Quien, although watching the proceedings of the German police, was not in the house.

The next day a few more of the heroic band who had befriended Quien were arrested, including the Comtesse de Belleville, Princesse Marie de Croy, and Madame Bodart, an Irish-woman by origin.

That Quien was the only agent in the denunciation of Miss Cavell and her workers was not maintained by the prosecution; but that it felt sure that there was a disturbing accumulation of coincidence pointed to his having been the chief instrument of her betrayal.

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Miss Cavell and M. Baucq were shot. The Comtesse de Belleville and Mlle. Thuilliez were sentenced to death; but, thanks to the rapid intervention of King Alfonso, these latter sentences were reduced to penal servitude for life. M. Cappian and Madame Bodart got fifteen years, Princesse Marie de Croy six years' hard labour, and nearly everyone else who came in contact with Quien, heavy terms of imprisonment. And yet Quien, who, according to his own story, had performed prodigies of daring of a similar nature; Quien, who bragged of his exploits everywhere, was not arrested by the Germans until November, and then received a sentence of three months.

It was immediately after Quien's return from Holland that events happened rapidly. On 29th July he finds out Baucq's address - forty-eight hours afterwards M. Baucq is arrested. Madame Bodart gives him a compromising parcel - three days later she is arrested. Cappian, Madame Debève, Mlles. Bergeret and Spinette, Mesdames Jacobs, Adam, and Machiels, all known to Quien, are arrested.

The Abbé Boskeils and Madame Vandamme, whom Quien asked to forward people to Holland, shared the same fate. Madame Adam and her three aunts, M. Houtard and M. Van Vooterghens, with whom Quien lodged at some time or another,

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all fell into the German police net in circumstances which clearly pointed to Quien having denounced them.

This long chain of coincidence ensured Quien's being found guilty by unanimity, but as only four, instead of the requisite five, out of the seven members of the court-martial voted for the death penalty, he escaped the firing-party.

There was no doubt in the minds of anyone who followed the proceedings of the court that Quien had served Germany, that he was a rascal who would just as lief hand over those who had befriended him as anyone else to German justice. Had his trial been held in war-time he would certainly have found his judges unanimous in pronouncing the death sentence. But he had the good fortune to escape trial until after the cessation of hostilities. While on general grounds of morality the world would have been well rid of such a base fellow, while his character as a traitor was proved beyond doubt, yet the prosecution failed to fasten directly upon him the historic shame of having betrayed Miss Cavell and M. Baucq. He was a loose-liver, a braggart with an almost epileptic imagination, and a thoroughly diseased desire to be for ever playing, not any part, but the part in the very centre of the stage.

During the war I met just such a man. He was

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a French civilian who managed to come through after Namur had fallen. He was provided with such a bewildering collection of passports and identity papers, that anyone to whom he showed them, which he did freely, would have been thoroughly warranted in turning the police on to him. He was an engineer, had been a doctor, an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy, and tutor to the Tsarevitch: journalist, traveller in wines, and a few other things besides. In Switzerland, and during the war, he got himself arrested as an Allied spy. After a visit to America he was refused permission to visit the British Front as a correspondent, and had an epileptic fit in my office by way of protest against this decision. As a matter of fact, the man was utterly patriotic and harmful only by word of mouth. He died some years after the war playing an innocent flute in the Foreign Legion band. Quien in many ways resembled him. The man who wants to make himself out more important than he really is frequently gets himself and others into trouble.

That the Germans sought for agents among the gaolbirds of occupied territory is but natural, and that Quien was frightened or bribed into acting for them was established beyond doubt. But there remains the curious and disturbing evidence, given by many of the noble women who were

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alleged to have been victims of his treachery, which made it clear that Quien was far from being the only traitor lurking around them.

Thus Princesse Marie de Croy, testifying with an emotion that deeply impressed the court, declared that weeks before the passage of Quien at the Château de Bellignies she and her entourage had been watched by German police, that sentinels had been placed around the estate, the château had been searched, and she had been forced to burn all compromising documents. She had warned Miss Cavell at the time to be on her guard. Princesse Marie, who was tried with Miss Cavell and sentenced to six years' imprisonment, was asked by the President of the court if she knew how her arrest had been brought about. The Princesse replied that as regards her own case she had no thought that Quien had denounced her. It was as a matter of fact another of the band of martyrs, Mlle. Thuilliez, knowing that an innocent woman was accused of the Princesse's share in the work, who herself informed the Germans of the Princesse's rôle. Mlle. Thuilliez, M. Cappian, Madame Bodart, and many others with whom Quien came in contact, also refused to place upon him the responsibility of their arrest, or for that of Miss Cavell. It is clear from evidence that before Quien made his appearance on the scene the whole

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organisation from the Front to the Dutch border had aroused the suspicions of the German police, who, undoubtedly, with the assistance of creatures such as Quien, were seeking for a chink in its armour of secrecy. There is more than one woman in the world who must ask herself with anguish how great was her share in the execution of Miss Cavell and M. Baucq, and the long personal martyrdom of more than threescore other patriots. Even at Miss Cavell's home there were the two serving-maids who fell victims to the Herculean build, the prestige and the glibness of the 'French officer,' Quien. There was the tragedy of a sixteen or seventeen-year-old English orphan to whom Miss Cavell had given shelter, poor 'Pauline,' who got into conversation with an 'English gentleman' in Brussels. He asked her to spend an evening with him in town. The young girl returned drunk from her outing, and three days afterwards the 'English gentleman,' this time in the guise of a German police officer, arrested 'Pauline's' benefactress. 'Pauline's' part in the betrayal was unconscious surely, but nevertheless terrible.

Another element of doubt is brought into the *affaire* by the evidence of Mlle. Carola Ernst (sister of the Belgian patriot, Willy Ernst, who was shot by the Germans at Hasselt in 1917), that it was a German nurse working for Miss Cavell who

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acted the part of informer. But the defence influenced the court's opinion even more by the mention of the name of Neels de Roode, who notoriously was in German service during the occupation of Belgium. He was shot and killed by a young Belgian patriot named Louis Bril, who was himself subsequently executed by the Germans.

Louis Bril's brother, in written evidence to the court-martial, declared:

'I write this in my own name and on behalf of all my family. Our two sisters who had the last two interviews with our brother Louis are prepared to swear that Louis had said to them: "I have just seen Neels de Roode. I am convinced that he is a traitor." He further stated that he had been given information by Neels de Roode with regard to the arrest of M. Baucq and Miss Cavell, that he was convinced that it was de Roode who had denounced her. Writing personally, I am absolutely convinced that Neels denounced Miss Cavell, and that was one of the reasons for which my brother killed him, quite apart from the other crimes he committed.'

The prosecution, probably impressed by the accumulating doubt as to Quien's part in the great betrayal, reminded the court that quite apart from

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the Cavell case there was ample evidence with regard to other matters to prove that Quien had been an enemy agent, and was liable to the death penalty, which was duly pronounced, but on revision was reduced to one of a long term of imprisonment.

CHAPTER NINE

LENOIR AND THE LADY

A THIN-FACED lawyer, Maître Desouches, and Pierre Lenoir, a debauched young rake, in the middle of July 1915 received 5,000,000 francs, representing half the sum for which they had sold their country to Germany. The first 5,000,000 was brought to them from Switzerland by an envoy known as the 'Red Man' in a huge packet of French banknotes. Five million in thousand-franc notes does not make a very remarkable bulk. It is only, after all, 5,000 thin notes, but when the sum is made up of no less than 65,000 notes, of which 28,000 were for five francs, the package becomes strangely voluminous and likely to arouse speculation as to the origin of the money. None of it was clean. It had come straight from no issuing press, but had obviously been carried about in many a greasy pocket-book. Some of it was spotted with the dirty brown stains of dried blood. It was part of the proceeds of the levies wrung from French towns and villages by their German

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invaders, and two Frenchmen allowed themselves to be paid for their treason in the money thus extorted from their martyred countrymen.

All the stock figures in these treason cases were represented in the case: Caillaux, Malvy, Bolo, *Le Journal*, Turkish pashas, German-Swiss, and a swarm of international adventurers, pseudo-Barons and ladies, who were at pains to disguise their vulgar names of Smith and Jones in the more pleasing dress of Princesse de Beauregard and Baronne d'Arlix. All these Duchesses of Downstairs proved to be Lenoir's undoing; a traitor, he was himself betrayed after two long years of alternating agony and hope by the Baronne d'Arlix, the mistress for whose death he and his doting mother daily prayed for months while she lay ill in the flower-scented South.

In the drama of human ignominy and despair shown in French treason trials, there is no tragedy more terrible than that revealed in correspondence between Madame Lenoir in Paris and her son Pierre at Cannes, bending solicitously over what he ardently hoped would be the deathbed of the mistress who knew too much. She lived to betray him, but died before the firing-party at Vincennes crowned her lust for vengeance.

Pierre Lenoir was a man pursued by the Furies. His father was a shrewd man of business who, as

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virtual controller of official, banking and other big advertising accounts, had become not only a multi-millionaire, but a personage of social and political standing, with a house in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne and a large circle of influential friends and acquaintances. Pierre Lenoir, the son, was thirty-three years of age at the time of his trial in 1918, and had acquired great notoriety as a degenerate spendthrift. He dissipated his money and his prospects at such a rate that the family, a dreaded organisation in France, had his affairs placed under the control of a legal trustee. When the war broke out he was besieged for money by his mistress, to whom he had promised the moon, and by moneylenders and by the holders of blank bills which he had been foolish enough to sign. He was in every way a morbid individual, passing rapidly from the heights of confidence and cheerfulness to the depths of morose despair. The constant use of opium and morphia made of him at times nothing much better than a human rag with neither will nor moral sense.

Lenoir's chief concern was to escape being sent to the Front. By pulling a few strings he managed to join the young army of *embusqués*, who, as clerks, military office-boys and motor-car drivers, for a time filled Paris with the clatter of their warlike ardour. The recruiting authorities were

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probably well justified in believing that he was not worthy to fill a more honourable position at the Front. His duties were light, and his superior officer was so lenient that he would have been able to carry on 'pleasure as usual' if it had not been for the fact that pleasure is an expensive luxury, and that he was living on an allowance of 4000 francs a month.

The idea of obtaining money from Germany seems to have come from Desouche's acquaintance with a Madame Saumart, who, in the world of *grandes cocottes*, called herself, as *nom de guerre*, the 'Princesse de Beauregard.' The Princesse made her *début* in public life by winning a beauty competition, and thence soared down to higher things, for before the war she had been the mistress of Prince Hohenlohe-Oehringen, a nephew of the former Imperial German Chancellor. At lunch one day in Paris, she lamented the stupidities of a war-time *régime* which prevented her from joining her lover in Switzerland. After an interview with French secret service officials she went to Switzerland several times, bringing back with her valuable information for her French employers and 160,000 francs from her gullible love-sick Prince.

Shortly afterwards Desouches and Lenoir were in touch with the Germans at Berne and

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eventually received 10,000,000 francs with which to purchase the *Journal* on their behalf. Charles Humbert, Senator of the Meuse, President of the Senate Army Committee, got wind of the negotiations and ousted Lenoir from the combination within a very short while, using to replace the funds, which he suspected to be German in origin, money obligingly placed at his disposal by none other than Bolo Pasha. It is difficult not to pay a tribute to the skill with which Germany in one disguise was flung out of the back door only to return in another through the front entrance.

Lenoir had been foolish enough to confide much of his story to the Baroness, so that even when he discovered, by purloining her letters, that he was not alone in her affections he did not dare to break with her.

She fell ill – desperately ill. He could only hope for a happy ending to her malady, and watch over her with such care that she should have no opportunity of giving him up to justice before her death. He was concerned also with another matter. Lenoir had given the whole of his commission on the *Journal* transaction, some 500,000 francs, to his mistress, and they had both made wills in each other's favour. Lenoir was anxious to prevent the Baroness from having an opportunity of altering

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that will, a precaution which he no doubt felt necessary, as he himself had long before, and without her knowledge, removed her name from his own testament.

The necessity of sealing the lips of Madame d'Arlix arose first in December 1915. Humbert was then fighting to oust Lenoir, who, with his mistress, was installed in a fashionable nursing home. Lenoir was suffering from a drug debauch, and the cancer which finally killed Madame d'Arlix two years afterwards had begun to show itself. To alleviate her sufferings she also had taken copiously to drugs. There Lenoir, who was much depressed about the turn of events, admitted that behind his contract with the German-Swiss Schoeller for the purchase of *Le Journal* stood Herr von Romberg, German Minister at Berne, and Prince Radowitz, one of the heads of the German central propaganda organisation. A year later, Madame d'Arlix and Lenoir settled down at Cannes.

The wretched woman seemed to be on the point of death. She had made her will before leaving Paris, leaving all she possessed to Lenoir, whose only sentiments for her by that time were those of fear and repugnance. He bitterly regretted the money he had given her and was determined to get it back. He also, with even greater anguish, repented the

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moment of confidence which placed him in her power.

Mother and son wrote to each other with what freedom of expression was allowed by postal censorship. It is difficult in reading the full correspondence to decide which of the two, mother or son, is the more terribly cynical in suggesting means whereby the end can be hastened, or the more savage in expressions of joy when the doctors report a turn for the worse. For the mother it can at least be said that her ferocity was that of a tigress defending her cub.

'My dear Mother,' writes Lenoir, 'the doctor always says the same thing. The illness is making rapid strides. The patient is getting weaker and weaker. She has no strength, no appetite, and lives on nothing. That's true - on absolutely nothing. I don't know what she can live on! She no longer wants to go out. She can hardly stand; she is thin, pale, almost livid, and seems only to want to rest. I think that the way she loses her memory and constantly changes her mind is a sure sign of that moral decay which shows itself by a collapse of mental power, and which is to be seen as clearly as the nose in the face of some sick people just before the end. Therefore, patience. It can't be long now, not too long, my liberation from an unparalleled nightmare.

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'I hug you with all my heart, my dear, kind Mother.'

From another letter: 'The first tapping has not had the results I anticipated. To-day, if there's any change, it is for the better. I can't understand it. Ah, there are times when I could cry, and all the same the doctor does not seem to be a fool when he says: "It may last for a month or two, and if there's a complication it will be less." I am so worried.'

A gleam of hope: 'I have happily had a good long and kind letter from Dr. I. giving me some interesting information, and telling me that the sun and rest can do nothing to change the end, which sooner or later is inevitable.'

A Nice doctor gives him further comfort. 'He reports considerable progress [of the illness] and said to me in so many words: "Without complications you'll have another month at the outside."'

Another specialist reports gloomily. 'He has just said some consoling things to me, but alas, we know what fine words mean from these cursed doctors.'

Then, Lenoir having been put out of *Le Journal*, Schoeller sends his man to Paris to demand the return of his money. His arrival throws Lenoir into a panic. All he can do to comfort himself is

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to go from one doctor to another in the hope of finding somebody to reassure him that the long-awaited death of Madame d'Arlix is at hand, and to think of the means of bringing about that happy issue to his troubles.

One of them was very positive, for as Pierre wrote to his mother: 'He even went as far as to say that in such cases the best service that could be done for patients was to help them on their way as quickly as possible. But those are matters which it is better never to write about.' Evidently!

There, in the sunshine of Cannes, Pierre Lenoir sat down and considered his position. In the sunlit room there lay the livid skeleton of the woman he had loved, and to whom he had confided the secret of his crime. She was dying, of that he had no doubt as he wrote to his doting mother. "There are unmistakable signs of the end before long. I don't give you the horrible details, but the smell and the weakness mean bed for her to the end. She is broken, nailed down there, incapable of movement. Oh, what a release!"

But she was an unconscionable time in dying, and while Pierre Lenoir undoubtedly lacked the fibre of a real murderer, he was quite willing to help Nature take its course if that were to rid him of the haunting fear of a court-martial. 'I cannot tell you by letter all I hope for, but for certain new

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and quite private reasons I have every ground for thinking that the end of my Calvary is near. These are evidently merely words, for I can't write to you what I want to let you know. I have certain little plans of my own, and I think we'll see something fresh in a day or two. It is not often, with all the trumps I am going to play, that the results I await are not obtained.'

Again these hopes, due to the administration of opium, were vain. His dear Berthe would not die. His terrible mother advised him to encourage the patient to do all the foolish things that people in her dying condition want to do, adding hopefully that that might 'hasten the end.'

It is always well, and especially in France, in judging of the actions of people of peasant, and especially of Norman stock, to place much to the account of greed. But the court refused to believe that these desperate desires to hasten the end of Madame d'Arlix were due entirely to a determination on the part of Madame Lenoir and of her son to recover the money he had squandered on his mistress under the terms of the will she had made before leaving Paris. The family, in spite of young Pierre's extravagances, was very wealthy, and was accustomed to think of money matters in a large way. All it could hope from Madame d'Arlix's death was the addition of a few hundred

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thousand francs to the many millions it already possessed. Fear of betrayal led to prayer for release. The will to murder was there, backed by the inflexible love of his old tigress mother. All he needed was the courage. Madame d'Arlux recovered for a while, and in 1917 she revealed, in reply to inquiries, the existence of Schoeller and the German origin of the funds with which Lenoir had purchased *Le Journal*. She lingered on in cruel agony for another year. Lenoir was unanimously condemned to death as a traitor by the court-martial, and his death was no improvement on his life. When he was first taken to the Dungeon of Vincennes he begged for time in which to make revelations regarding Caillaux. He was put back into his cell, and it was found that what he had to say was of no particular interest. When he next reached the execution ground he was in a state of collapse so complete that the men who carried him from the motor-car did not know whether it was not a corpse that they tied to the stake to be executed by the waiting firing-party.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DREGS

ALL that can reasonably be advanced in the absence of fresh and conclusive evidence as to Miss Cavell's betrayal is that the load of guilt is distributed over a great many shoulders, that no one, Quien or Laperre, has to carry the full burden of this historic act of treason. New facts may come to light, but, for the present, her death remains a monument to German police methods in gathering and acting upon evidence, ever converging upon the same facts, collected by ruthless energy from scores of French and Belgian traitors in occupied territory.

Quien, unfortunately, was but the type of many others who sank to the depths of degradation in occupied territory.

The trial of Toqué, and a band of such informers, as well as the belated proceedings against Julius Cæsar Laperre, who was condemned to penal servitude for life, reveal not only the depths to which frightened humanity will

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sink, but also the heights to which it can reach. For every country had its women who faced the firing-squad or served long terms of imprisonment for offences against the rules of war similar to those which led to the shooting of Miss Cavell. They were in many cases ignorant farm hands or small farmers' wives, over whose fate no Ambassador was concerned, who had no one to plead with the Supreme War Lord on their behalf, so that their fate has passed unnoticed.

Of all the many French treason tragedies during the war, those discovered after the Germans had been driven back from French soil were the most terrible, and the fact that most of them were played out in the intimacy of small country towns and out-of-the-way villages only adds to their horror. What happened when German troops first occupied a town or a village? The inhabitants, after the inevitable moment of panic, set about the task of adapting their lives, as loyal Frenchmen, to the new order of things. While decent folk refrained from every avoidable contact with the enemy, all the undesirable elements sought to placate their new masters, who, like most conquerors, were not easy or by any means accommodating.

Recruits for the German police services as informers and spies were at once sought, and readily found among the inhabitants with a

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criminal record and among prostitutes. Some, as was the case with Quien, the man in the Cavell case, were actually in gaol when the war broke out. From the Laon-Hirson-Fourmies district alone, twenty-eight of such pitiful beings were brought to trial after the war. Some for the satisfaction of some old village feud had denounced their enemies for concealing arms, or a leg of mutton. Others for fifty francs had sold the lives of wounded French or British soldiers lying hidden in the neighbourhood, as well as the life or liberty of the brave folk who had sinned by giving them shelter, for it is against the laws of war to be compassionate even to your own countrymen. People were sent into slavery by their own compatriots for having refused to sell them nails, or for having more than their right ration of meat, even though the extra amount was used to feed some hidden Allied soldiers.

The gorge rises at such crimes, but that fine-sounding phrase, the International Laws of War, is capable of covering nearly every enormity. Germany, in decreeing the requisition of every shred of cotton and every scrap of metal in the occupied France and Belgium, acted in a perfectly natural way for a country at war and in need of such munitions. She also at the same time provided her police in occupied countries with a

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tremendous lever. For an unsundered door-knob, a hidden coil of copper wire, she could threaten an old man or woman with prison, or their daughters or grandchildren with a labour camp. * With just a little word about a hated neighbour in the village having a large stock of prohibited articles in his possession, both prison and the labour camp could be avoided. And the people who had once accepted blackmail of that sort were lost unless they were made of the stuff of martyrs. When, as was usually the case, the people approached by Germany in this way already had a bad record or a criminal past, their fall was swift and sure.

Germany devoted quite special attention to the Franco-Belgian frontier zone, for it was there that an important section of Allied spy and counter-spy services was concentrated. Men were dropped at dusk from Allied aeroplanes; homing pigeons, the peace-time pets of the whole region, were frequently seen. It was also there that hundreds of Allied soldiers lay hidden waiting for a chance to get to Holland.

The biggest gang of informers upon all such activities was that headed by a Frenchman named Toqué, who with twenty-seven of his fellow-countrymen and women was tried for treason after the armistice.

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Of all the repulsive monsters in the band Alice Loffroy and her lover Reselle were undoubtedly the worst.

Alice was a young and rather pleasant-looking girl of twenty-five, who, with her husband, had left domestic service, to live with her parents near Noyon, when war broke out. The arrival of the Germans seemed to let loose all her worst passions. She became the mistress of one German officer after another, and soon took service as a spy, travelling to Paris and to England in the guise of a Belgian refugee. On her return, she attached to herself a young perverted brute, Reselle, a liar, a bully and a coward; and by her wholesale denunciations of her neighbours, and in particular of those against whom she had the old and petty scores of acrimonious village life to settle, she made herself so much the terror of the countryside that people literally fled from her along the roads. Her finest exploit was the denunciation of a village woman for keeping two Senegalese sharpshooters in a false chimney. After a good deal of bargaining she got the price she wanted, £6 a head, and asked for the loan of a German uniform, so that she might enjoy seeing what happened. The Germans threatened Madame Hain, the hostess, with death, if she did not deliver up the two refugees; who, overhearing these threats, came out

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of their hiding-place and were shot the next morning.

In connection with this case, the Mayor of the little village, Anguilcourt-le-Sar, his deputy, and the rural policeman were shot in their quality as 'responsible authority,' Albert Hain, the eighteen-year-old son, had his sentence of death commuted into one of penal servitude for life, his younger sister got a year, the bakers who had supplied the bread for the refugees and three others involved shared twenty-six years of imprisonment between them. The only one who escaped scot-free was old mother Hain, but then she had been paralysed for over ten years.

Fricoteau, the Mayor, in writing his will on the eve of his execution erected his own monument.

In the illiterate French of the peasant he says good-bye to his wife and family, and tells them: 'I shall die in my cloth coat and waistcoat, and I'll wear my "sabots." I tell you this so that you may be able to recognise me when you come to fetch me. I have handed my purse to the office. It has six marks and twenty-five centimes in it. I have other belongings and a blanket, I expect they'll send them to Madame Cromer. My dear wife and children, I am asking a lot of courage from you. Look after things well; and when small

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troubles come, think of me. . . . Aristide (his son), after the war don't farm any hired land. As for Eugène, he had better get work on the railway. I have told them to take to you the linen, cape, pair of trousers and a waistcoat in cloth and a blanket with a grey border and a white edging that I had here in the Citadel.'

The women were as bad as, if not worse than, the men. In those small northern frontier villages, there was always a considerable criminal class formed by the people who smuggled tobacco and other articles between Belgium and France, and while a number of the women concerned in the wholesale betrayal of their countrymen were of no good repute, their activities were assisted by several young country girls, who apparently got drunk on the excitement of war, flung themselves at the heads, if not the hearts, of the invading Germans, and became the mistresses of one German after another. The secret police being more settled in the villages than the fighting-man, liaison between them and these women was easily established and permanently maintained.

The French trials of these individuals give a dreadful picture of the effects of fear, spite, and cupidity upon ill-balanced minds, but their sordid gloom is relieved by the heroic attitude of the general populace.

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Men and women, girls and boys, knowing that they were surrounded by spies, who in the guise of fellow sufferers followed them even into gaol to pick up crumbs of information and of evidence, lived with death as their constant guest, when a rustling or an ill-timed sneeze from some poor devil hidden in a cupboard would send them to the stake or to gaol.

Nearly every village had its own petticoated 'terror,' who stopped at nothing. The 'Terror of Trelon' was the wife of a French Customs Officer imprisoned in Germany. She became the mistress and collaborator of a number of members of the 7th German Army Police and organised 'her' village with all the ruthless skill of a Chicago gang leader. Appreciating her usefulness as an informer, the Germans allowed her to carry on trade in prohibited and requisitioned articles on a large scale, and she soon made all 'unofficial' smugglers realise that if they wanted to work they would have to work through her, or else be given away to the police. By such intimidation she recruited a whole personal staff. A decent Frenchwoman, who had refused to smuggle for her, was imprisoned, and on her release found it prudent to become charwoman in the 'Terror's' house. Her cooking was done by another woman, who had thus purchased exemption for her fifteen-year-old

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daughter from the labour deportations carried out by Germany.

When the 'Terror of Trelon' saw the rapid advance of the French armies just before the armistice, she packed a few of her belongings on a barrow and disappeared with her son, in the dusty wake of Germany's defeat, in pursuit of her German police lover.

In every army, British, French and Belgian, intelligence services endeavoured to follow what was going on beyond the trench lines, and each army had its 'Red Book,' in which were noted the names of many of those in occupied territory who had become suspect by reason of their intimacy with the invaders. When the armies of liberation advanced, popular fury against such people sometimes expressed itself with the utmost vigour. Women and girls, who had been intimate with German soldiers, were chivvied round villages and struck by angry crowds. Some were ducked in ponds and others had their hair bobbed in rough and ready forecast of future fashion. The worst offenders wisely followed the example of the 'Terror of Trelon' and discreetly tried to vanish. Many of them succeeded, and are carried as 'missing' in the criminal records of the world.

Léandre Hubert, one of the few frontier smug-

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glers who served the enemy, very nearly managed to escape. He was caught long after the armistice. Even the Germans would have nothing more to do with him and sent him back to the country he had betrayed, where he was picked up by the French police, a starving and desperate tramp.

Hubert was a smuggler before the war, and the Germans, when they occupied the region of Hirson, found in him a ready and unscrupulous worker. Like so many of his class, he can scarcely be honoured by the name of traitor, for he apparently never knew the meaning of loyalty. He was a lazy, drunken, spiteful young lout, who, giving evidence himself, said: 'People moved by spite and greed came to tell me of hidden soldiers and illegal stores. When the folk denounced were friends of mine, I said nothing, but if I disliked them, I gave them away to the Germans.' In his chief exploit, he out-Cained Cain. A French airman crashed in occupied territory near his village, and the pilot was led by two children to the cottage of Romeo Hubert, also a smuggler and the brother of Léandre, who, hearing of the matter, promptly sold his brother to the Germans. A man capable of such a crime was naturally *capable de tout*, and Léandre Hubert acted as a spy for Germany upon his countrymen in gaol, internment camps, and labour colonies as well as throughout the countryside.

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To crown his *macabre* cynicism, when he was finally arrested he wore a French war cross which, he admitted, he had stolen from a French soldier's corpse.

The court during these trials was the scene of many a dramatic moment. Over two hundred men and women who had been cast into prison, beaten by Germans, or whose fathers or husbands had been shot, confronted the sinister creatures responsible for their sufferings.

One French soldier, whose comrade died in captivity, who had himself been beaten *à la gramophone* before being sent to gaol, seeing in the dock the man who had sold the secret of their hiding-place to the Germans, exclaimed with his forefinger accusingly out-thrust: 'That man should die. If he is not sentenced here, our folk at St. Michel will kill him.' Then, looking at the man: 'Your grave is open and waiting for you.'

The trial of all these sordid folk was full of such dramatic incidents, and the most amazing of them all showed a Frenchwoman swearing that Camille Rochon, a French soldier who had escaped from Maubeuge, had been sold to Germany by a peasant. While she was giving her evidence a girl, who had been summoned neither by the prosecution nor the defence, rose in court and denounced the witness of having been the guilty

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traitress. Pulling from her corsage a yellow and much-folded sheet of paper, she read the farewell letter of Camille Rochon, whom she had hidden for nine months and whom she was to marry at the end of the war. It is the pathetic document of a man lacking in education, who realised that as he wrote he was already dead. The first sentence: 'I am shot this evening and am buried in Fourmie Cemetery,' recalls the famous line of Keats in *The Pot of Basil* when the two brothers ride forth with the lover: 'they and their murdered man.'

The document breathes the spirit of fatalism and in it is contained much of that 'inferiority complex,' that national discipline that makes war possible.

'We had expected,' he wrote, 'to lead a happy life after the war. But that's a dream. I stop living at the age of thirty, the victim of Angèle (the perjured witness). The judge told me that again this morning. I hope that you will avenge me, and the French too when they get back. You see I never told you that I was a soldier. I should have done so, perhaps, for you might have given me good advice. Anyhow, I am another victim of the big people. But if the good God calls me to Him, it is because He knows that I have never hurt anybody. We'll meet again up there. Above all, Claire, don't let the kiddies know. It's better

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that they should be told that their father died in battle than that they should think he was killed by French people who gave him away. . . You are still young, try to marry a man worthy of you. I have just made my last confession and have received absolution. I end by embracing you and don't forget me, for I am going away loving you with all my heart. I send you forty francs and my cape. Au revoir, Claire, and a real good night, for it's my last. I have kissed this letter so that it may tell you how hard it is to be shot down.'

Toqué, who was regarded by the prosecution as the chief criminal, had already caused some stir in France as a Colonial servant in Africa, and had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for voluntary homicide, when in celebration of 14th July he had used living natives as a set piece for the fireworks he let off. This first sentence was reduced, but he soon got into gaol again for fraud. So when the Germans came to Laon in September 1914 he was quite ready to be friendly. At his trial he was shown to have acted as an agent for Germany's spy services in France, and endeavoured to send a woman emissary to Paris to get into touch with Almeyreda of *Bonnet Rouge* fame, with whom he had been in correspondence prior to the war, and whose friendship he offered effectively as a

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guarantee of good faith to the German General Staff.

Toqué left the selling of hidden soldiers, the underpaid work of the informer to the common herd. His treason was of a more subtle and infinitely more productive kind. He placed himself at the disposal of the *Gazette des Ardennes*, an organ run by the German General Staff with the help of another gang of traitors, who bore an active part in the despicable campaign which sought to undermine the resistance and moral of Frenchmen on the wrong side of the line, and responded as deep answers to deep to Germany's propaganda *mot d'ordre*, launched in Paris by the *Bonnet Rouge* and in occupied France by his *Gazette*.

The trial ended in the death sentence being passed upon twelve of the accused, including Toqué, Reselle and five of the female Furies. Five acquittals were pronounced and the rest of the gang was condemned to a total of eighty-seven years of penal servitude and imprisonment. War being over, the death sentences were commuted.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TREASON IN PEACE

TREASON is not a crime peculiar to France, and, if more is heard of traitors in that country than elsewhere, it is perhaps due to the readiness of its people to cry, 'Nous sommes trahis!' as a camouflage for their own shortcomings in the way of national discipline, and also to their intense desire to find out how things really are managed. It would be easy to name at least half a dozen men in England who, had they been Frenchmen, would have provided the Third Court-Martial of the Seine with sittings as dramatic and terrible as those recorded in this book. Each race has its own appropriate methods of dealing with most things in life.

It is a remarkable fact that, as a result of the war, the spy, and in some cases even the traitor, now sheds a glamour around him. People have realised that men who went to their Journey's End did so with six days in and then a rest in billets; lived and died with their countrymen, could talk,

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laugh, and do what they pleased, so long as they did their duty. People have also understood that a spy, and especially a traitor, was a man whose every action and thought must have been directed towards complete self-obliteration. Such men could not afford to dream; they were the Wandering Jews of the war, and death, when release came, waited for them, cold and pallid, with none of the flush of fighting on his face; and they met him alone. Such a picture is doubtless true, but, although there were heroic war-spies, and while there were traitors to a flag who died for a faith or a race, there is as a rule nothing edifying about either as a class. Unfortunately, now that the League of Nations has been formed, the Locarno Treaty and the Kellogg Pact have been signed, we are all become potential spies or traitors.

Everywhere there is a deep-rooted distrust which augurs ill for these essays in platonic peace, and that lack of confidence is expressed in the increasing stringency of legislation against traitors and spies, and is providing authority in peacetime with thunderbolts which, before 1914, were reserved for use only after the outbreak of hostilities. Reasons for this are not hard to find, after a 'war to end war' which took war right out of its rut of militarism, and made of it a completely national concern. Before then the recruiting

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sergeant or the conscription authorities waited without unseemly eagerness to call upon young manhood to do its duty. Now they wait at the cradle, whatever may be the sex of its occupant. Formerly they wanted reasonably young blood. Now they claim the rheumatically old gaffer as well. The trend of thought, in this world of peace and disarmament conferences – in some countries it is already expressed in statute form – is that when war breaks out, every living soul, every industrial, intellectual, and economic force throughout the country, is automatically mobilised just as though it formed part of the Army or the Navy.

Such elements being now recognised as vital to national defence, this civil mobilisation and its peace-time preparation are being given the same protection against foreign curiosity as has already been provided for everything connected with the raising, training, equipment, and mobilisation of the army, navy, and air forces.

This wider conception of war has enormously extended the field of action of an intelligence service and the scope of treason. The scientific complexity of modern warfare has in itself added to the labours of 'intelligence'; but the purely military and naval information sought for has nevertheless changed but very little in the last few

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centuries. A country formerly wanted to know, and still wants to know, its neighbour's preparations for attack and defence. It sought, and still seeks, in peace-time to obtain detailed knowledge of the size and character of the armies it may have to meet; of the topographical nature of the countries in which it may have to fight; of everything connected with problems of communications. As armies still have an economical habit of living on the country they invade, it is still necessary to know all that can be ascertained as to its resources in food supplies and its industrial equipment. An invader cannot feel at his ease unless he knows enough about the character, habits and customs of the conquered inhabitants to be able to estimate in what way relations with them may best be established and maintained. Broadly speaking, all the elaborate questionnaires, prepared by secret services seeking military knowledge for the guidance of their side, deal with matters covered in this brief summary of military requirements of intelligence. There is, indeed, but little changed in this direction, and there is an almost complete similarity between the instructions given to Count Robert de Paradès, who was sent as a spy to England by Louis XVI, those given to a French agent who visited England several times between

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1899 and 1904, and those issued by the French Secret Service to-day.

Among the chief duties of the higher-class spy is the recruiting of traitor-spies. The world has always been too ready to think that a spy and a traitor stand on about the same level of moral degradation. There are, however, to be seen quite clearly in this record of French war trials at least two categories of both classes. There is the man who, from a sense of patriotism, spends his life in obtaining for his own country information which is held to be essential to its existence. There is the much less admirable individual who is willing to acquire information anywhere and sell it to anybody to the best advantage. A traitor, however, may commit his crime with the loftiest personal intentions; believing perhaps that only by foreign assistance can his country be freed from the tyranny of a dynasty or the despotism of a dictatorship. If he succeed history will probably, as it has done in the past, claim him as a national hero; whereas, if he fail, disgrace awaits him. But for a man of whatever race who barter the lives of his own kith and kin, and imperils the safety of his own land for reward, there can be nothing but loathing.

More than one conference on International Law has endeavoured to agree upon a definition of

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what constitutes a spy and a traitor. One of the difficulties is that some spies are, so to speak, licensed, and ply their occupation not only openly, but surrounded by every mark of respect and deference by the very countries whose secrets it is their official duty to probe and understand. At the head of this official spy-machinery is the Ambassador, whose chief duty it is to keep his Government posted, not only with regard to political developments in the country to which he is accredited, but also with regard to its diplomatic, military and naval relations with other countries than his own. He has at his service naval, military and air attachés, whose activities in the field of direct spying are obviously much greater than his own, and when discovered in too flagrant a way lead to a request for their recall. These officials are themselves spied upon; sometimes by traitors in their own Chancelleries; by the installation of secret service agents among the domestic staff; or by the more ingenious methods revealed in the course of the Dreyfus case. The German military and naval attachés had taken a flat outside the Embassy for their private business conversations. The French Secret Service, before they moved in, fitted every chimney of the apartment with listening-tubes leading to the floor above, where an agent recorded every

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remark that passed. Most Foreign Offices possess a hard-worked department where the codes used by the different diplomatic missions are so systematically discovered that any really important secret obtained by the Diplomatic Services is entrusted for transmission to a courier.

This system of licensed spying undoubtedly leads to corruption and incites to treason, but as everyone knows the rules of the game, and as everybody plays it more or less frankly, it escapes the odium surrounding the ordinary spy, who is willing to lead a life of guile and deceit among people whom he is seeking to betray. The ideal spy is naturally the patriotic man whose intelligence has been supplemented by a course of technical training which covers a far greater range than that of an artillery engineer and naval officer run into one. Such people are, however, rare and, for the most part, the ordinary spy would gladly sell most things, including his paymaster, to whom he is always an object of suspicion.

Traitors as a rule are to be found among the failures of life, or among those whose appetites are larger than their banking accounts, or, as wrote General Lewal, in his *Tactique du Renseignement*, prophetically describing Duval of the *Bonnet Rouge*, and some others in this book, among

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'men suffering from some injustice, men who have been badly treated . . . who are soured by jealousy, swept off their feet by political passion. Hatred and revenge are the forces behind them. No great distance lies between a man hurt in his interests, his affections, his dignity or his convictions, and a spy, so ardent in his desire to injure those who have harmed him, by favouring their adversaries.'

The whole record of the Caillaux case shows how convinced was Germany that his exasperation, and the shock to his vanity by being kept out of office during the war, were so great as to make him a useful factor in her politico-military schemes.

Important traitors of the type of Duval are fortunately everywhere rare, and the peace-time army of treason has, as a rule, to be recruited in the lower strata of society, in criminal classes, among the ruined gamblers, and in the ranks of women whose patriotism is as frail as their virtue.

A typical, if somewhat unfortunate, example of the classical method of recruiting traitors is given by the post-war case of John Leather, which ended in three Englishmen, who had been acting on behalf of the British Services, being sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. As a rule, the organiser of a spy system takes care not to reside in the country where the machine is at work, but

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Leather, with more courage than prudence, established himself in Paris as manager of a wireless concern, and set to work to obtain detailed information with regard to the French military air services, wireless and fleet. Phillips, one of his agents, sounded a Frenchman named Clédât, who had been losing heavily at Monte Carlo, but who, after appearing to accept the offers made, informed the French authorities. For a long time they were unable to lay their hands upon the organisation, which had working for it a French girl, Marthe Moreuil. This former artist's model made her way into the confidence of a number of French air officers by claiming to be a parachutist, and by other more time-honoured methods of seduction, and she in turn became a recruiting agent. She approached a friend, the mistress of a dashing young fellow who was cutting a great figure at Versailles in the uniform of a French naval officer. When she suggested to her lover that here was an easy way of making money he was unable to resent with adequate indignation the infamous proposal made to him, for he himself was nothing but an impostor with no right to wear a uniform of any sort. He was arrested as a common swindler, and immediately acquainted the authorities with the bigger game that was afoot. This is one of the regular old-fashioned

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ways of carrying on espionage, but nowadays new forces are encouraging sedition and treason throughout the world.

The 'statesmanship' of Versailles and the innumerable conferences which have ensued have failed not only to solve the ethnical puzzle so easily dismissed by President Wilson's prescription of 'self-determination,' but also to come to any understanding with Russia. During the Peace Conference, among the many strange delegations that came seeking a draught of Dr. Wilson's famous One-Night Cure was a collection of gentlemen wearing knee-breeches, velvet coats and seventeenth-century hats from the back of which hung down long plaits of flaxen hair. They represented a little Slavonic dot on the ethnical map of Saxony, inhabited two or three villages, and wanted to have a country of their own. At the same time came a delegation which firmly believed that Wilson's famous series of Notes had been Epistles to the Sudetians, whom even those indefatigable letter-writers, the Apostles, seem to have overlooked. There were delegations so poor that in order to support their arguments, they had to beg for ethnical maps from richer deputations and then colour them to fit in with their own claims.

All over Europe the new frontiers have resulted

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in creating or reviving movements for autonomy and the rights of minorities, and consequently in the growth of what legally frequently becomes treason. Such movements naturally have reached their greatest intensity along the Rhine. The French, on one side, have endeavoured to obtain by indirect means the Rhineland buffer State which Foch declared to be essential to the security of France and the permanence of peace, and which was denied him by Wilson and Lloyd George. The illusion long cherished in France that the Rhineland is not really a German sprang again to life, and while the French Government could not openly and officially espouse the cause of Separatism, the set of idealists, agitators and gunmen who played the game of Rhineland Republics was left in no doubt whatever that they enjoyed at the very least preferential treatment. They were allowed with almost complete immunity to upset the whole life of the region, the railways controlled by French troops of occupation were at their disposal, and if any organised official German body of men had attempted to carry on the civil war tactics of the Separatists, there is no doubt whatever that French troops would at once have intervened and restored order with a heavy hand. Dr. Dorten and Herr Matthes may very well have been sincere

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in their ideas, but to the vast majority of their countrymen they and their supporters were nothing more or less than a gang of traitors, and there is no question but that in the preparation and development of the separatist movement, French money was at work.

Germany in a similar way still encourages the autonomist agitation in Alsace-Lorraine, where the tremendous confusion of race and interests singularly favours her enterprises. France has made, as indeed was inevitable, a number of errors in dealing with the post-war problems of the recovered provinces. Too quickly, perhaps, she has tried to make of them nothing but an ordinary part of France, and the Alsatians, accustomed as they were to a large amount of provincial independence, did not at all relish becoming an ordinary department of France and exchanging the efficient German official machine for the extremely inefficient set of men sent from Paris, largely thanks to political favouritism, to manage the rejoined provinces. The long series of treason trials in Alsace since the war shows to what an extent Germany on her side is exploiting her possibilities.

But greater than any of these territorial or ethnical difficulties as a source of treason and spying are the growth of class war and the world's

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realisation that in any other general war, everybody in his or her sphere will become a combatant on the day of mobilisation. It is customary to be deeply shocked by Bolshevik propaganda. Although I am far from accepting, let alone extolling, Bolshevik deeds or doctrines, I confess that there may be logic in their madness. From their point of view the world, instead of consisting of a number of national classes, such as British, French, or American, is in reality made up of economic classes who have hitherto been kept apart by these philosophically unnatural barriers of nationalism. The Bolsheviks also have their spies and their traitors. By the very nature of things they have a wide field for their activities. Every seditious movement throughout the world is a field for their activities and, preaching class warfare, they are able to recruit, with more confidence than can a bourgeois Government, their spying and traitorous personnel in foreign countries. There have been cases of Sovietic spying in England. They were direct attempts to obtain military information by the ordinary methods of espionage. The special branch at Scotland Yard certainly has records of attempts made, sometimes with success, to obtain, under the shout of Workers-of-the-World-Unitel information of a purely national importance such as would be

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sought for by any Tsarist Government. In France, which has had since the war a score of cases of spying and treason to deal with, the Bolshevik organisations have been able to appeal to the deep-rooted idealism of the French working classes, who, while at heart profoundly conservative, nevertheless in thought and in action frequently think it becoming to be extremely revolutionary.

It is among the working men that Russia to-day finds her spies, and she recruits an army of traitors who are led to believe that they are serving the great International cause of the proletariat, while, as a matter of cold fact, they are being made to do exactly the same dirty work that has always been accomplished by traitors and for precisely similar national reasons.

In 1927 the French Secret Service got on to the tracks of a big Russian organisation which was run by an attaché of the Soviet Embassy. Its agents appealed to the revolutionary class-instincts of the French working man employed in powder-factories, arsenals, ship and aircraft building-yards. Moscow was trying to enlist the support of sympathisers at Creusot, Bourges and other big war establishments, in order to obtain information of a military character.

When Russia's agents started their work they

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took considerable pains to disguise their inquiries under the more or less respectable cloak of class warfare. If they wanted information with regard to tanks it was because these were instruments of repression, and had been so used in quelling civil disorders and strikes in various parts of the world. The same argument was used when an honest, if class-fanatical, French working man was asked to supply information with regard to gas masks or aeroplanes. But once a man had compromised himself by furnishing any information, once he had accepted any payment, however small, even if it were only for the re-imbursement of necessary expenses, he soon became aware of the fact that the information required by his Sovietic employers was precisely that which would have been expected from a traitor in the days of the Tsarist régime.

The questionnaire drawn up and furnished to the men who were recruited by the Soviet Embassy in Paris could almost have been found in duplicate in the archives of the Secret Service of any ordinary bourgeois Government. Information was required with regard to 'the armour and construction and the tactical results of the new tanks now on trial and under construction, particularly the new heavy C2 tanks, the light C, and the middle-weight Vickers tanks.' 'We know,' the questionnaire continued, 'all about the tanks

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used during the war. We want details as to dimensions and weight of the new tanks, the motor, its system and horse-power, armament and armour, speed and climbing capacity, fuel and radius of action.'

Details were also asked for as to every form of mechanised transport. This thirst for knowledge was quite clearly inspired by considerations other than those of mere class war, and the Russian Government in trying to satisfy its curiosity in these matters was only following the example of every other Government.

During the war, secret services and propaganda assumed such importance that it is but natural that they should continue in twilight peace. France was not alone in discovering that her legislation dealing with spying and treason was defective. In the first few years of peace she had to deal with a number of treason and spying cases, in which her friends and her enemies were equally involved. English, German, Polish, Italian and Russian agents were implicated in these various trials, and it was soon found that the law passed in 1922 to fill in gaps revealed by war conditions in treason and spying legislation had already become ineffective. It had not taken into account the profound change that has made of war a truly national business and has converted a great part

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of peace-time industrial, economic and social activity into part of the war-time mobilisation of a country. The new law proposed by M. Poincaré's Government is mainly inspired with the desire to arm justice against those who in peace-time seek to convey what may be called 'national' information to a foreign Power. How far the net may be flung was shown by the debates upon that Bill, in the course of which the Reporter in the Senate roundly declared, on behalf of the Committee and with the approval of the House, that peace-time measures for mobilisation included everything 'calculated to ensure the future of the country during the strain of warfare by encouraging every element contributing to its prosperity—birth-rate, health, general, professional and technical teaching and economic strength.' Divulgence of any measure taken in peace-time with those ends in view was declared to be the equivalent of an act of treason, just as would be the selling of the plan of a fortress.

Every nation has its own domestic Dora, but measures such as this, which are being everywhere adopted, even in the calm days of peace, are a painful indication of the real trust of Governments in the reality of peace talk and arouse a frightful misgiving that the war, which was to make the 'world safe for democracy,' is in reality going to

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result in the birth of a whole family of international Doras, under whose autocratic sway what slight freedom of speech, thought and action is left to us will be destroyed and a brake applied to that exchange of scientific, industrial, economic and social information between countries upon which the whole development of modern civilisation depends.



